

*"I cannot teach the head when the heart is broken and/or the mind is troubled"*

*Parkway School District Teacher of the Year, St. Louis, MO*

**The Content and Function of School Social Work in Lalitpur, Nepal in  
General Frame of School Social Work**

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### **Summary:**

This study determines the content and function of School Social Work in Shree Jana Udaya School Lalitpur, Nepal where the position of School Social Worker is absent. The theoretical framework for this research is 'School Social Work Model' developed by School Social Work Association of America. The school chiefly serves low-income families and domestic workers. I interviewed 11 respondents – 5 students, 3 teachers, and 3 parents; interviews were voice recorded and transcribed.

The research design was qualitative and exploratory, incorporating elements of ethnographic data collection and exploratory thematic analysis. Analysis of the data revealed several salient themes. The school is free from discrimination and ensures gender equality. School facilities, activities and opportunities are available to all the students and the teacher-student relationship is positive and healthy. SMC and PTA have been instrumental. School has progressed, significantly in terms of organization, stricter school rules, regular monitoring of student's performance through examinations and emphasis on extra-curricular activities.

However, weak home-school-community linkage was noted. Most of the parents are unmindful about the significance of home school partnership as well as their role in ameliorating their child's achievement and learning. The efforts from school in augmenting parental and community involvement is insufficient. Also, the results signify incompetent teaching-learning environment mainly because of execution of lecture method, insufficient educational facilities and teaching-learning equipment, use of corporal punishment and ineffective measures to deal with academic failures.

The perplexity among the respondents concerning teasing and bullying was noticed. Although few cases of bullying are found, neither awareness programs nor prevention programs have been conducted by the school. Students bullying teachers was also discovered. Drug abuse has also been a problem among students in this school, however, the respondents claimed that it is decreasing.

These issues and problems existent in the school are scrutinized from the perspective of school social work and function of School Social Worker in dealing with problems and challenges are proposed.

**Keywords:** parental and community involvement, teaching-learning environment, bullying, corporal punishment, academic failures

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AASW	Australian Association of Social Workers
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BCBL	Better Classrooms Better Learning
CMC	Centre for Mental Health and Counselling
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal
CWISH	Children and Women in Social Services and Human Rights
DEO	District Education Office
ECA	Extra-Curricular Activities
ECD	Early Childhood Development
GAN	Global Action Nepal
GOs	Government Organizations
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
INSSW	International Network for School Social Work
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
MOE	Ministry of Education
NASW	National Association of Social Workers
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NER	Net Enrollment Ratio
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSET	National Society for Earthquake Technology
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PR	Parent Respondent
SBT	Student Bullying of Teachers
SMC	School Management Committee
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SLRC	Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium
SR	Student Respondent
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSWAA	School Social Work Association of America
TR	Teacher Respondent
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## **1) Introduction**

Schools provide a formative experience for children. Based on the experiences of the child, schools can be a haven or a horrible and dreaded place. The images of crayons, brightly painted halls, and bulletin boards can create joy or fear for a child. Interactions with the fellow students can lead to pleasure for some students whereas alienation to others. There are many cases where children cannot respond effectively to the school environment because of the stress in their home and family lives. The school environment had traditionally required students to conform; however, when the students could not live up to the school's expectations, they usually dropped out. Nevertheless, at present, some countries have laws which require schools to conform to the needs of students and provide a setting in which all children can be educated. (Openshaw, 2008)

School students are meant to gain academic skills such as reading, comprehending and analyzing. Apart from these, they are also supposed to learn about themselves, make friends, form relationships, and tackle challenges. Notwithstanding, some students are seen to suffer from curable to severe challenges during the school period. There are many problems that students encounter during their school days such as academic problems, social problems, behavioral problems, and problems at home. Academic problems include failing in exams, scoring low, having learning problems, irregular attendance; social problems refer to being bullied, not being able to make friends, not 'fitting in', peer pressure; behavioral problems comprise of dismissing school policies, fighting with classmates/friends, not getting along with teachers, substance abuse; whereas problems at home contain being abused, neglected, living in or under poverty, substance abuse and so on. Such problems might hinder the student's learning experiences or even social interaction. It is often said that the problems that the students experience during this time of their life lead to more serious problems and complications later in their adult years. (Careers in Psychology, n.d.)

The historic concerns of education have led the focus on school social work. Over the years, the education institutions have confronted many problems ranging from accommodating immigrant populations, discrimination against precise groups, truancy, and the tragic waste of human potential in emotional disturbances of childhood to problems regarding school disruption and safety, homelessness, drugs, and AIDS (Constable, 2008). After recognizing the fact that the conditions whether in the family, the neighborhood, or the school itself are hindering the children from learning and carrying out its mandate was the concern of the school, the first social workers in schools were hired (Allen-Meares, Washington, & Welsh, 2000; Costin, 1978) (as cited by Constable, 2008).

It has been long since the School Social Workers are concerned about children who are not able to use what education has to offer. The operation arena of School Social Workers is where children, families, schools, and communities encounter one another, where failure exists, where gap builds up, and where education falls apart. School Social Workers support students, their schools and families to thrive in tasks connected with their learning, growth, and development. The aim behind this is to uplift them to fully realize their intrinsic dignity, capability, and



potential. This purpose and these values develop the role of school social work. Moreover, the work of the School Social Worker is the work of the school, and the effectiveness of the School Social Worker becomes the effectiveness of education. The fundamentals of the school social work are applied in varying settings along with the other members of the school team. In doing so, School Social Worker also figures out the ways to establish collaboration between the school and its staffs to solve problems. (Constable, 2008)

It is evident that the environment within the school is not the sole reason hindering the success of students; the home environment that the student gets plays a crucial role as well. A study conducted by Grolnick and Ryan (1989) concluded that the parental autonomy was directly related to children's self-regulation whereas inversely related to acting out and learning problems. The study further mentioned that because much of what is required in school is not intrinsically or spontaneously motivating (Ryan et al., in press), excess control at home may prevent children from taking on or internalizing the regulation for their own school-related behavior (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Conversely, when the regulation of behavior is not internalized, environmental control and monitoring are necessary to ensure compliance (ibid). The findings of the study further suggested that the "search for excellence" in education should proceed beyond the classroom context per se to what is perhaps the most socializing influence on children's school related functioning – namely their parents (ibid).

As home and community environment can pose challenges for children, schools should focus on the whole child. It means that school should consider family or community conditions that obstruct the child's educational progress. When the disparities stemming from home and community backgrounds are addressed, it enables children to achieve their full potential through education. Parents and communities should be closely engaged in every aspect of school and should be prepared to support it at any fair and reasonable means to promote quality education. On one hand, parents must have vested interest on what schools have to offer and in the educational outcomes for their children as well as communities. On other hand, it is obligatory for the schools to be sensitive to the communities they serve, to care for and guard the children entrusted to them and be accountable to the local community in their governance and management. (UNICEF, 2009). Taking into account these aspects of home-school-community involvement, this study examines the context of home-school-community linkage in the study area.

Over the last two decades, access to education at all levels has widened significantly in Nepal. However, Clark (2013) states that the education sector continues to face challenges related to underfunding, lack of quality and politicization. Additionally, he writes that the government is working to address these issues, but progress is oftentimes slow. Though in percentage terms, public schools constitute around 80 percent of these schools and private schools only 20 percent (Thapa A. , 2011), the quality or the performance of the public schools are still unsatisfactory (Parajuli & Das, 2013). Koirala (2011) stated that the country is still caught in the vicious cycle

of poverty, lethargy of illiteracy, and tradition. He has further mentioned that three-fifths of the country are still illiterate, out of which three-fourths are women population.

Effective teaching-learning environment is crucial for augmenting the learning outcomes at all levels. One of its salient features is the application of a variety of interactive methodologies through the creation of stimulating, participatory and child-friendly learning environments. Despite multiple endeavors to alter approaches to teaching and learning in Nepal, several classrooms remain textbook and teacher-oriented with the application of didactic teaching methods which highlights rote learning and the uncritical absorption of facts. Additionally, the scarcity of teaching-learning materials enhances over-reliance on textbooks. In Nepal, the dependence on summative exams is high as the majority of the school's conduct term and annual tests. However, the assessment and examination system does not emphasize application and synthesis skills. (Ministry of Education, Nepal, 2016). The existence of such issues undermines the delivery of quality of education.

This research also explores the teaching-learning learning at the study area with a focus on the achievements and deficiencies in the endeavor of the school to offer a conducive teaching-learning environment.

In addition to the academic problems and problems at home, there are social and behavioral problems faced by the students which are generally overlooked by the schools in Nepal. Bullying (Rana, 2012), corporal punishment (physical and mental abuse) (CWIN, 2008), sexual abuse (IRIN, 2008), high dropout and repetition (UNESCO, Kathmandu, 2012) are some of them. A research study report entitled “No More Suffering - Child Sexual Abuse in Nepal - Children’s Perspectives” published in April 2006 by UNICEF and CWIN, found that nearly 18 percent of the 4,000 students interviewed had experienced severe sexual abuse, including molesting and rape (IRIN, 2008). But such issues rarely come to light; either the school does not take the issues seriously or the students do not make a complaint. One of the major aims of this study is to figure out the existing problems among the students in schools in Nepal.

On the other hand, even students hesitate to share their problems. Rana (2012) states that children are also reluctant to admit to bullying to teachers or parents because they are afraid of the repercussions or have no faith that it would make things better. Such scenario exists in Nepal also because teachers are strictly professional and students somehow feel frightened to interact with teachers. The student-teacher relationship is aloof and mostly solely confined to academic arena. Moreover, the school environment merely gives an opportunity for the students to develop their behavior and attitudes. According to Reimar (1971), ‘school pervades the lives and personalities of their students in powerful and insidious ways during their most formative years.’ Hence, it is crucial for the school to offer an environment where children can express their problems and together work on it enabling them to perform at their best and grow and develop in the best possible ways.

This study focuses on the significance of establishing a conducive school environment where the students feel safe, secure and comfortable to interact with school personnel and share their issues and feelings.

A School Social Worker can help the student to address problems at an earlier stage. When the students are helped to cope and deal with such problems, it increases the tendency and opportunities to succeed. Moreover, it supports to fulfill their unmet physical and emotional needs leading to enhancement of their ability to learn and adjust to school. By not solving the problems of the students, they are somehow being pushed towards alienation, failure, nervousness, and inferiority complex. For instance, bullying affects the lives of many students every year throughout the world, causing them humiliation, frustration, fear, loss of self-esteem, depression and social isolation that eventually leads to the increase in school absenteeism, poor or worsened school work, personality alterations, illnesses and suicide (Aryal, 2016).

Further, it is found that the schools in Nepal adopt short-term solutions to deal with problems. When the students act inappropriately, mostly they are given corporal punishment or are charged a certain amount depending on their problematic acts. If the situation gets serious, the school invites the parents to discuss the student's behavior. The discussions usually conclude to controlling the students rather than conducting assessment and developing and implementing effective intervention strategies. Nevertheless, there are some schools who recruit personnel for learning support focused to provide physical, social, emotional, and intellectual support. They concentrate on enabling all students to have an equal opportunity for success at school by addressing barriers to and promoting engagement in learning and teaching. Also, few schools have counselors who help students to deal with their behavior problems, low grades, poor attendance and similar problems.

Nonetheless, the number of schools offering counseling services are scarce, confined to private schools and most of them are expensive in Nepal. In the year 2011, the basic level enrollment in government schools was 85.8% and that in private schools were 14.2% (Department of Education, 2012). It is imperative that the child learns to adjust to his environment and not retreat from it unless it is so destructive that he will be unalterably scarred by it (Ginsburg, 1989).

Calis & Calis (2015) states that the consultation given by the School Social Workers about their education life does not substitute the practice undertaken by school 'psychological counseling and guidance teacher'. As per the current practice, the focus of the psychological counselor is on supporting students in the areas of academic achievements, personal development, orientation, school-related problems, education activities, etc. (Calis & Calis, 2015). Notwithstanding, the role of School Social Worker is to implement supplementary promotive approaches to enhance school's supportive services (ibid). The school counselor and School Social Worker are expected to work as a team within this milieu (ibid). Besides, the emphasis of School Social Worker is more on the social life of a student as well as the school based

circumstances. Better results are accomplished when both psychological and social aspects are scrutinized (ibid). Counselors are focused on helping people deal with their emotions, develop coping strategies, and adapt to their environments whereas although social workers focus on these issues, they are more concerned doing the reverse: adapting the environment to the client (Social Work Leicensure, n.d.).

School Social Workers provide support to the children so they can succeed in school. The goal of school social work should be to deliver opportunities and resources to all children to help them prevail academically and socially in a safe and healthy school environment. Moreover, social work in a public-school setting plays a crucial role in developing students and connecting them to the resources and giving necessary support to maximize their potential in the educational process (O'Donnell, 2000 – as cited by Openshaw, 2008). Since School Social Workers are able to bring a life changing impact on their young clients in a way that those who work with adults rarely experience, school social work is one of the most rewarding and interesting areas of social work practices (Openshaw, 2008). School Social Workers have been carrying out this role in schools for the past 100 years, making them some of the earliest social work practitioners (Franklin, Kim, & Tripodi, 2009).

In addition to striving to deliver quality education to the students, the schools in Nepal should also focus on ensuring that they work in the best interest of child entrusted to them through provision of safe and protective school environment which is sufficiently staffed with trained teachers, equipped with adequate resources and graced with appropriate conditions for learning (UNICEF, 2009). The aim of the school should also be to support students to develop, discover their own dignity and worth, and come to realize their potential (Constable, 2008). The school should encourage active learning and promote participation offering the appropriate learning environment for the children (Child Development and Early Learning, n.d.). In absence of School Social Worker in schools, this research will examine the ways the school has been endeavoring to ensure child well-being and welfare enabling them to perform at their best.

## **2) General Dimensions of School Social Work**

### **2.1) History of School Social Work**

The history of School Social Work mentioned as following is derived from Handbook of Social Work and Social Welfare by Barabara W. White (2008).

School Social Work is an international profession practiced in many countries. The social work practice in school emerged due to the increasing need of educating diverse children and establishing the link with the community services to be able to do so. The origins of school social work can be traced to New York City; Boston, Massachusetts; and New Haven, Connecticut in 1906. In the early 1900s, schools were struggling to fulfill the multifaceted needs of their students, it is then the social workers drew their professional attention into schools. Social workers were called on for the support to facilitate understanding between public schools and the families of the children enrolled.

The first School Social Workers brought their knowledge of the varied effects of poverty into the schools to help school staff meet the new challenges in public education. Moreover, they could connect families that had little experience with public education to important resources in the community and help them to participate more meaningfully in their children's education. During the mid-century, School Social Workers enhanced their focus on a more clinical approach to social casework. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, School Social Workers and education reformers combined their clinical skills with their systems perspective and re-energized the field's focus on the need for interventions that include attention to individuals, families, schools, and communities. In addition, debates and legislation about student rights, discipline, educational opportunity, civil rights, and gender equality sparked a renewed commitment to educational policy and social change.

The International Network for School Social Work (INSSW) was established in 1990, with the aim to share information and provide resources to the School Social Workers worldwide. The first international school social work conference was held in 1999 in Chicago and had the participation of school social work professionals and educators from 20 different countries.

Schools were frequently failing to meet the educational needs of its children during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Hence, the attention was more shifted to improving services and educational opportunities for children with learning and behavior problems, as well as children in poverty. School Social Workers were often included in the discussion of solutions for addressing the social and emotional problems that were adversely affecting learning. They have also contributed to prevent and intervene with the social issues that have permeated the public schools like substance abuse, teen parenting, and violence.

Utilizing the guiding principles of the ecological approach, School Social Workers comprehend that the fulfillment of educational opportunity and student's well-being can be achieved through change on an individual level, at home, in school, and with quality community support. In order to do this effectively, School Social Workers must play diverse roles.

## **2.2) Content of School Social Work**

### **2.2.1) School Social Work**

When children attend school from an early age, they also learn behaviors and habits, either from their own experiences or from other students. It is evident that nowadays more schools and parents are pressurizing students to excel both in academic settings and extracurricular activities. To fulfill the expectation, the students have to juggle activities such as homework, sports, tests, extra classes, tuitions, and problems at home. Certainly, such types of pressure and responsibility can most likely overwhelm the young minds of those children. Such scenario requires the help from School Social Worker. (Careers in Psychology, n.d.).

The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) define School Social Worker as the trained mental health professionals with a degree in social work who provide services related to a person's social, emotional and life adjustment to school and/or society. The service provided by School Social Workers do not limit to the students, it extends to the school, parents as well as the community (SSWAA, 2012). According to Barker (2003), School Social Workers provide help to students, families, and teachers to address problems such as truancy, social withdrawal, over aggressive behaviors, rebelliousness, and the effects of special physical, emotional, or economic problems (as cited by National Association of Social Workers, 2010).

School Social Workers have played a crucial role in establishing linkage between school, home, and community (NASW, 2012). Consistent emphasis has been given on channelizing the efforts of schools, families, and communities toward helping students refine their educational outcome and social, emotional, and behavioral competence by harnessing the unique perspective of school social work profession – viewing the person in his or her environment (ibid). The environment comprises of social contexts ranging from the overall environment at school, home, community as well as teaching-learning environment including the relation the person maintains with the individuals in each environment.

When the students encounter emotional, mental, physical, and behavioral distress or problems, the School Social Workers offer them immediate and short-term help. A student might experience such problematic situation when he/she cannot use his/her ability to solve problems or cope with the situation. The School Social Worker puts upon efforts to lessen the intensity of the students' emotional, mental, physical and behavioral reactions to such situation. The help is also provided so that the students can return to their functioning level before the incident occurred. In this way, the School Social Worker will support the student in coping with the situation effectively; preventing other ineffective ways to cope such as hurting oneself, giving up, isolating oneself, and/or substance abuse. (SSWAA, 2012)

School Social Workers believe that emotional and physical needs must be addressed for children to be able to fully benefit from the instruction provided at school. To enable the school to meet its academic mission of educating students, School Social Workers provide a comprehensive approach to support the strengths of children and families. (White, 2008)

Thus, the major goal of school social work is to enable students to function and learn in the school environment (Openshaw, 2008). As per the need, the School Social Worker covers micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice (ibid). School Social Workers work primarily with individual students; however, groups of students and parents are also developed and facilitated (ibid). Effective school social work practice consists of collaborating, consulting, developing behavior plans, and training others to work with difficult children in the context of a child's daily school experience (Frey & George-Nichols, 2003). School Social Workers are also involved in training and resource-building activities such as staff development, community education, and grant writing (Openshaw, 2008).

### **2.2.2) School Social Work Interventions**

According to Constable, Kuzmickaite, Harrison, & Volkmann, 1999, despite social worker's many roles and responsibilities, four basic tasks have been identified as common to all school social work jobs (Constable, 2008):

- *Consultation* with others in the school system as a member of a team.
- *Assessment* applied to a variety of different roles in direct service, consultation, and program development.
- *Direct intervention* with children and parents in individual, group, and family modalities.
- *Assistance* with program development.

School Social Workers perform these tasks using the ecological systems perspective as a framework and intervene with multiple systems at the different levels that impact the lives of children and adolescents. The target of the services may include students, groups, parents, and families, or an entire classroom, school, district, neighborhood, or community (Allen-Meares, 2004; Dupper, 2003; Franklin, 2006). The School Social Worker may also focus on teachers and administrators for intervention and change (Broussard, 2003; Frey & Dupper, 2005; Dulmus & Sowers, 2004). However, the general focus of a School Social Worker's intervention may be determined by the local needs and funding structures (Harris & Franklin, 2004). (White, 2008)

#### ***Individuals***

The lives of the students at the school are affected by the range of experiences and problems existing in our society. There are many students who live in poverty. There might be cases where the students, or someone in their family, may have a mental illness, may have been abused or neglected, or might be involved with the criminal justice system. Many students have learning needs that require an advocate for special education services. Some of the students may be dealing with the issues of grief, or loss or separation from loved ones. Also, the family may have been relocated often or experienced homelessness. Some students or a family member may be abusing alcohol or drugs. Schools may call upon School Social Workers to intervene because of issues at varying levels, from individual crisis intervention to community or school-wide prevention or education initiatives. (Dulmus & Sowers, 2012)

When school social work practice is concentrated at the individual student level, the social worker uses assessment and counseling skills, consults with others as needed, and works to establish a connection between the student with other resources and service systems to address concerns. At this intervention level, the School Social Worker is often directly providing the service, or may collaborate with a community agency to introduce service into the school, or may link the client with services available outside of school arena. (Dulmus & Sowers, 2012)

### ***Parents and Families***

In order to address concerns related to an individual student, the School Social Workers may intervene with parents and families, or they may target parents themselves for intervention. To give an instance, for a student who is often truant, the social worker may conduct a home visit to figure out the reasons for absence and engage the parent in problem-solving. Further, the social worker may also encourage the parent to participate in school activities, such as teacher conferences and PTA meetings. School Social Workers can work to empower parents in their interactions with the schools, including at the policy and decision-making level (Frey & Dupper, 2005).

Franklin et al., (2010) states that the parents are the experts on their children, and schools and parents are interdependent in their efforts to attend to the child's learning needs (as cited by Dulmus & Sowers, 2012). A problem in the lives of the parents or family may be stressing the individual child. A strong research base supports the importance and benefits of parental involvement in their children's education (Chavkin, 2006 - as cited by Dulmus & Sowers, 2012).

Franklin (2004) identifies the objectives that guide school social work practice in addressing parent-school partnerships (as cited by White, 2008):

- Educating school personnel toward understanding the psychosocial strengths and needs of families and supporting school staff relationships with vulnerable families.
- Offering relevant program interventions for parents and families based on an ongoing and current needs assessment.
- Helping the inter-professional team, the PTA, and school staff develop avenues for parent involvement in the operations and programs of the school. (p. 288)

### **2.2.3) Importance of School Social Work Practice**

*“School Social Workers practice in the space where children, families, schools, and communities encounter one another, where hopes can fail, where gaps exist, and where education can breakdown.” (Constable, 2008)*

School Social Workers are part of an integrated approach to child wellbeing and child protection that fosters successful learning. They are imperative professionals to confront complex interventions for learning, provide counseling to address personal and family difficulties, offer consultancy on school change policies and procedures, organize teacher professional



development and critical incident management. Social workers are professionally responsible to help safeguard the right of children and collaborate with teachers to ensure that school programs, environments, and policies deliver successful learning and life outcomes for all students. (AASW, 2015)

Since schools reflect the communities that they serve, students bring a wide array of social problems and needs into the schools. School Social Workers are often asked to attend to a wide range of physical health, mental health, and psychosocial concerns including crisis intervention, family and school violence, attendance issues, school dropouts, disability, abuse, substance use, relationship difficulties, delinquency, poverty, teen pregnancy, and homelessness. (White, 2008). They are in a unique position to intervene on behalf of at-risk<sup>1</sup> students and thus help ensure their academic success (Isaac, 2015). In low-income schools affected by poverty, it is estimated that up to 50% of students have learning and emotional problems that are challenging their success in school and in life (White, 2008). School Social Workers conduct assessments of students for mental health problems, substance abuse problems including the problems in the home environment (Isaac, 2015). Subsequently, they offer evidence-based interventions to work on overcoming these hindrances (ibid).

“A role for School Social Workers in promoting student success through school family partnership” article by Bowen (1996) underlines a social work intervention that enhanced parent’s ability towards forming conducive home environment leading to the promotion of family involvement in home learning activities (as cited by Mann, 2015). Likewise, a study conducted by Henderson and Berla (1994) noted that the most significant results out of social work intervention were improvement in student’s academic and social behaviors and improved parent-teacher communication. It also included more positive teacher’s perceptions of student’s future progress and parent’s increased knowledge of their children’s learning styles and need, greater self-esteem among students and greater parental satisfaction with school.

An article indicated that the number of School Social Workers was a substantial predictor of the number of students who completed high school in the 100 largest school districts in the United States in the 2008-2009 school year. The study further observed that the school districts with School Social Workers had a higher number of students finishing high school, indicating that the knowledge and skills that School Social Workers bring to the school districts can lead to better educational outcomes. (Alvarez, Bye, Bryant, & Mumm, 2013)

Moreover, a survey conducted among School Social Workers and school administrators in Minnesota reported that increasing school attendance, decreasing discipline problems, positive impact on school climate, advocating for students and families and behavior evaluation and intervention were the most significant outcomes expected because of school social work services. Besides, many studies have stated the advantages of school social work services

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<sup>1</sup> At-risk students are students who are not experiencing success in school and are potential dropouts. They are usually low academic achievers who exhibit low self-esteem. (Donnelly, 1987)

among the school personnel. For instance: administrators could get more time to fulfill their administrative responsibilities (Hofkins, 1994; Jenkins, 1994), and teachers could be assisted in developing awareness of student's mental health conditions, identifying potential triggers for symptoms, and modifying teaching strategies accordingly (Cuglietto, 2007). (as cited by Bye, Shepard, Partridge, & Alvarez, 2009). Also, School Social Workers extend support to teachers and assist them to more successfully tackling their classroom concerns, significantly for at-risk students (Isaac, 2015). When the barriers to learning are addressed, it leads to enhancement of student's ability to focus more on academic and positive interaction (ibid). (Bye, Shepard, Partridge, & Alvarez, 2009)

School Social Workers promote nexus between the school and community as well as support the school staffs to comprehend and respond to the personal, interpersonal and learning needs of all students, especially the at-risk students. Many students experience periodic or sustainable difficulties and fears during their student life in relation to personal and social issues. These issues include poverty, homelessness, refugee or asylum-seeker status, family separation, loss and grief, disability, drugs and alcohol, gender and sexuality, physical and mental health, bullying and lowered social inclusion based on cultural or linguistic background. These children will benefit from professional school social work expertise and intervention which is different from the skills of educators. (AASW, 2015)

#### **2.2.4) School Social Work Practice Model**

This School Social Work Practice Model is developed by Frey, et al. (2013) on behalf of School Social Work Association of America. All the following description is derived from the School Social Work National Model Brochure created by Frey, et al. (2013). The purpose of this Model is (1) to articulate the skills and services that can be expected from School Social Workers, and (2) to promote consistency in undergraduate and graduate social work education, credentialing, and professional practice, with the goal of improving academic and behavioral outcomes.

This Practice Model encourages School Social Workers to (1) provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services; (2) promote a school climate and culture conducive to students learning and teaching excellence; and (3) maximize access to school-based and community-based resources. School Social Workers are expected to possess advanced knowledge and technical skills to guide their practice in these three areas. The proportion of their time that School Social Workers engage in each practice varies widely depending on contextual factors, including the needs of the community, school, families, and students served.

##### **1) Provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services**

The primary direct service component of school social work practice is providing evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services to support academic and behavior outcomes. As the School Social Workers address the stressors present in the school and community that hinder the educational success, they have unique expertise in child and family

work. Furthermore, the consultative skills possessed by the School Social Worker can support the school staff in implementing interventions with fidelity. This practice is accomplished by:

- Implementing multi-tiered programs and practices,
- Monitoring progress, and
- Evaluating service effectiveness

2) Promote a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence  
School Social Workers promote a psycho-social environment that fosters academic engagement and achievement. Environments are conducive to learning and teaching when they have: (1) policies and procedures that produce safe and orderly environments; (2) capacity-building efforts to promote effective practices; and (3) supportive relationships within and between students, families, school, staff, and community partners. This practice is implemented by:

- Promoting effective school policies and administrative procedures,
- Enhancing the professional capacity of school personnel, and
- Facilitating engagement between student, family, school, and community

3) Maximize access to school-based and community-based resources

Maximizing school-based and community-based resources is the primary indirect or macro-practice component of school social work services. This may involve coordinating available services within the school or reaching out to community partners to secure services. School Social Workers know the services a school system provides, and they know the scope of services available within the community. Their skills in navigating these service delivery systems (e.g., health, mental health, child welfare, and juvenile justice) are crucial in challenging barriers to school and community resources that enable academic and behavioral success. This practice is accomplished by:

- Promoting a continuum of services,
- Mobilizing resources and promoting assets, and
- Providing innovative leadership, interdisciplinary collaboration, systems coordination, and professional consultation.

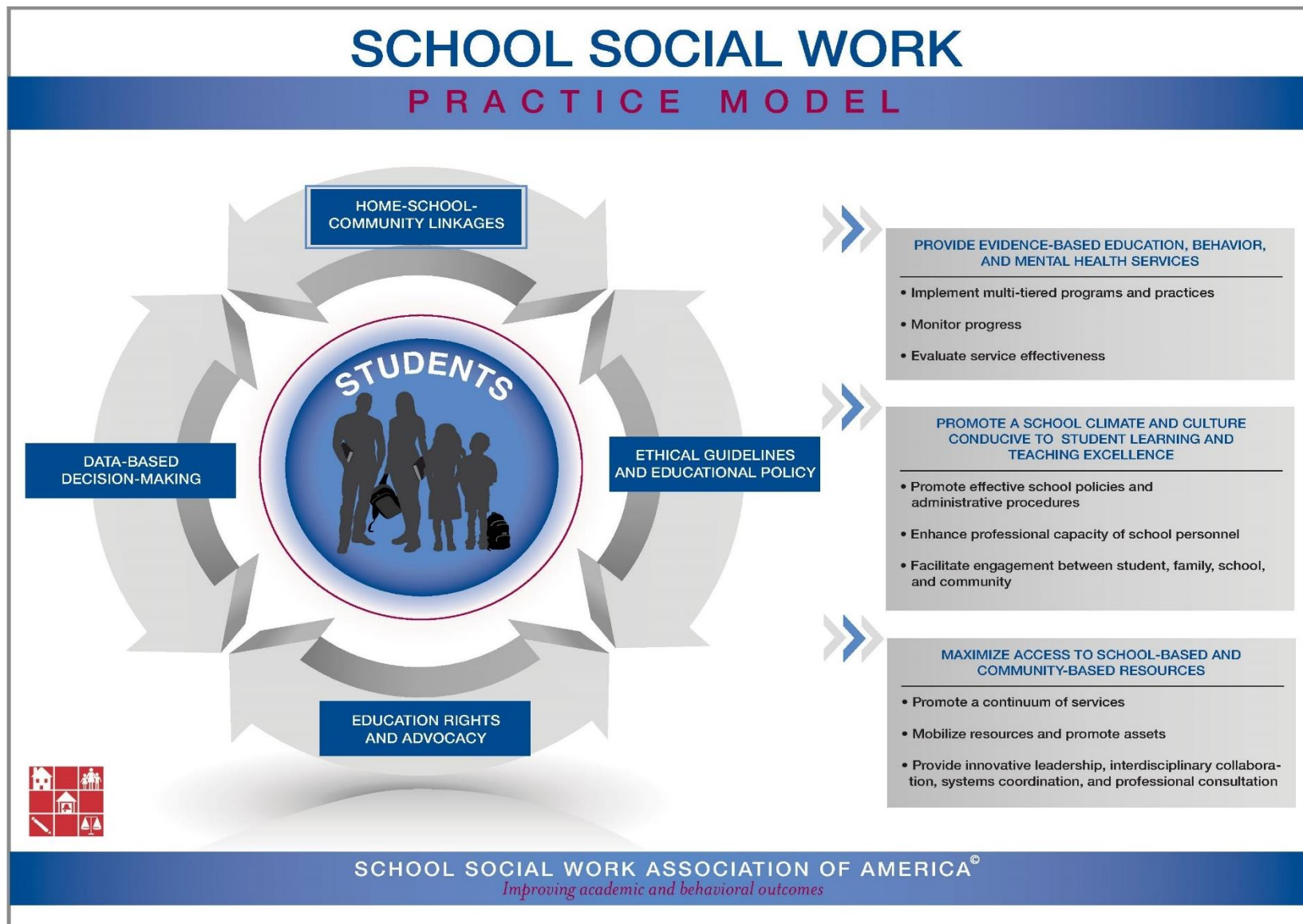


Figure 1 School Social Work Practice Model formulated by Frey, et al. (2013) on behalf of School Social Work Association of America

## **Key Constructs**

Each school social work practice is supported by historical scholarship and research that delineates this specialized form of professional social work practice. The following key constructs are infused into each practice.

### *Home-school-community linkages*

Academic achievement and behavior are profoundly impacted by the environment, including relationships and interactions across home, school, and community settings. Facilitating communication and promoting linkages across these systems is a central characteristic of school social work practice.

### *Ethical guidelines and educational policy*

School Social Workers follow professional ethical guidelines and carry out federal and state educational policy to provide the highest level of school social work practice. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) Ethical Guideline Series define expectations for ethical school social work practice. School social work literature further facilitates accountability by promoting the use of an ethical decision-making model when applying laws, policies, and codes to specific school dilemmas. The Code of Ethics emphasizes the need for continuous professional development to keep abreast of evidence-based practices in the field, and reflection on evidence-based practices to ensure that they fit the context and culture of the school setting.

### *Education rights and advocacy*

School Social Workers address the ways in which structural inequalities and school processes affect school quality and educational outcomes. School social work practitioners are expected to raise issues of diversity and social and economic justice that lead to school failure and educational disparities. School Social Workers should be able to balance their mandate as school employees to advocate for students and families with their mandate as social workers to help change policies and practices that undermine the dignity and worth of students.

### *Data-based decision-making*

School Social Workers use the best current research to design and implement interventions. School social work services should be informed by the research literature, adapt empirically supported interventions to fit student needs, and routinely evaluate the effectiveness of policies, programs, and practices.

## **3) Context of the Study**

### **3.1) Education in Nepal**

Education was formally established in Nepal after the establishment of the first school in 1853 AD. The first school was only meant to impart education to the children of elite and advantaged

groups of people. School was formally opened to the public after the establishment of democracy in Nepal in 1951 AD (2007 BS). After the introduction of a complete Education Plan in 1971, the education sector began to enlarge. The National Education Sector Plan (NESP) of 1971, financed by USAID, formed the Education Act in Nepal, which still exists in the country with various amendments. After the people's movement of 1990 established a multiparty system in the country, education development was realized more successfully and more rapidly as the Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) for primary students in 1980 was just around 16 percent, but by 2003 it had risen to 83.5 percent (MOE, 2005a). (Thapa A. , 2011)

Though the enrollment of the students in the school was increased rapidly the quality was not satisfactory, thus the demand for private schools was widespread especially from well off families (Parajuli & Das, 2013). By 1998, there was a significant growth in the private sector due to the prevailing school liberalization policy (Carney & Bista, 2009). Since that time the quality of public school was further deteriorated and private sectors hold the strong power in the school system especially through excellent results in School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination (Parajuli & Das, 2013).

Within the education system of Nepal, there are two types of system imparting the formal type of education all over the country (Parajuli & Das, 2013). They are public (government schools) and private schools (ibid). Or in other words Ministry of Education of Nepal categories public schools into two types: i) Aided community (public) schools, which receive regular government grant for teacher's salary and for other administrative purposes; ii) Unaided community schools, which do not receive a regular government grants, but are financed with support from community, donations from other sources and school's own resources (Thapa A. , 2011). That means public schools are run through the budget allocated by the government while private schools must arrange money by themselves for the school opening and running (Parajuli & Das, 2013).

According to the data from Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11, most of the students – 92.7%, from the poorest group attend the community schools whereas only 6.4 percent from this quintile attend the private schools. Based on the same survey, regarding the richest quintile, 60% of students go to the private schools and 39% go to the government schools. (Thapa S. B., 2013)

According to the Education Act (Eight Amendment, 2016), education up to class eight has been considered as primary education and education from 9-12 is known as secondary level education (eKantipur, 2016). Republica (2016) writes that earlier, the education from class 1-5 was recognized as the primary level, 6-8 as lower secondary level, class 9-10 as the secondary level and 11-12 as the higher secondary level. It further highlights that the new constitution ensures free education up to secondary level. The new Bill has however clarified that free education up to the secondary level is applicable to the community schools (Republica, 2016).

### **3.2) Problems faced by the Students – General Context**

The general problems that the students encounter, mentioned as below, is extracted from the book ‘School Social Work’ by Evelyn Harris Ginsburg, 1989.

The lack of enrichment at home and effects of social problems on children have hindered learning basic skills through elementary school and even into high school. This has been exacerbated by class size, choice of poor teaching methods and limited skills of some teachers. Teachers are often found to pressurize children and encourage minimal creativity. Moreover, they often fail to see tests given to children as indices of whether they are teaching successfully. All these factors mostly result to making learning tedious and stressful.

When children refuse to come to school and their parents state they are unable to get them there, it is generally because the parents have lost control of the child. Even when parents attach little importance to the child’s attending school or getting an education, truancy occurs. Perhaps the truancy also comes at a time when there is other turmoil in the family or when the student is involved with substance abuse. Besides, it is seen that pupils at their teens skip school to hang out with friends. Some might not go to school, some might leave school at lunch time, some might leave school at the end of the day but never return home for dinner whereas some might not return home the whole night. When such patterns are noted, they are probably involved in drugs, alcohol or gangs; perhaps even all three at once. These patterns might also lead to school dropouts.

Besides, a child’s behavior problem is sometimes caused by the way he is perceived in his school environment. For instance, teachers or classmates might belittle the student, discriminate him/her and do name-calling. Moreover, the child could be very young and just starting school. Or he might be in a new school and in need of time to adjust. He could come from another culture or speak a different language and therefore be very uncomfortable and limited in his ability to communicate in his current school. Or there might be a personality clash with the teacher or another child in the classroom. Perhaps he has had difficulties with a previous teacher and she has warned his successive teachers about him. It might also be that the pupil’s older siblings have run into trouble at the school. There is also the possibility that the child has a health problem and needs the services of the school nurse. Similarly, he may need help from the speech therapist or the truant officer or other specialists on the school staff. In fact, he might need a case study evaluation which would be a preliminary step to receiving special education services. These should all be considered and proper channels should be followed as indicated.

If all of the above are ruled out, the social worker’s services are called for. At this point, further decisions have to be made. Since the child is primarily in school to learn, his ability to do so has to be determined. Usually, an assessment has already been made by his teacher. This should, of course, be sought and shared at the outset. Often, a child’s learning problems will cause him to show signs of misbehavior in school.

Sometimes, the child referred is a bully or one picked on by a bully; either or both may be referred. The bully usually performs on the school yard or in other places in the school where he will be unobserved. The *American Teacher*, for October 1987, advises “first identifying the scope of the problem, establishing and enforcing behavior standards, closely monitoring school grounds and playgrounds, watching for physical evidence of abuse and, finally, teaching student’s skills in conflict resolution and negotiations to better prevent the problem and its consequences.” The School Social Worker would be helpful, in treating these cases, by working closely with the school administration in carrying out a full program aimed at preventing bullying.

Possibly, a child’s negative in-school behavior is rooted in his home life. If he came from a country which was at war, he might have lived with much violence and been taught to fight back openly or unobtrusively. Perhaps he saw this undesirable behavior modeled by adults around him. Or it could be that their culture sanctions a lot of fighting within the family at home. Some parents assume that a child is to be hit or yelled at because they were raised that way and they really do not know any alternative ways to discipline their children.

### **3.3) Problems in schools of Nepal**

Schools in Nepal face many difficulties and challenges which hamper the effective teaching-learning environment. The problems are caused by various social factors, school environment, home environment as well as the relationship the student maintains with individuals under these settings. Few of the problems are as follows:

#### **1) Child Sexual Abuse:**

A research report on child sexual abuse entitled “Silent Suffering - Child Sexual Abuse in the Kathmandu Valley” issued in June 2003 by Save the Children Norway in Nepal and CWIN, stated that a large number of school children in Kathmandu had been subjected to sexual abuse (IRIN, 2008). Nearly 13.7 percent of the 5,000 interviewed students had suffered from severe sexual abuse (ibid). Besides, as per CWIN (2008), among 432 cases of child abuse, killing and domestic violence, 16 percent of incidents were of corporal punishment (physical and mental abuse) in schools (CWIN, 2008). The data illustrates that child sexual abuse has been a serious concern and the cases in schools are ever increasing. Also, the data reflects the insensitiveness towards the rights of the children (ibid).

#### **2) Drop-out and repetition rates:**

According to Flash I Report (2011-12) prepared with the technical support of UNESCO (2012) by Department of Education, only seven out of ten children enrolled in grade 1 in Nepal’s schools reach grade 5, and more than half of them quit school before reaching the lower secondary level. The report further reveals that efforts must be focused on grade 1, where repetition and dropout rates are higher than in other grades. Among the grade 1 students in the school year 2011/12, 21.3 percent repeated the same grade and 7.9 percent dropped out from the school education system. It manifests that almost one-third of the grade 1 students could not



continue in grade 2. Although the promotion rate has improved as compared to the previous school year, this still represents a big challenge.

### 3) Corporal Punishment:

Corporal Punishment is still prevalent in the schools in Nepal with the belief that such punishment makes the school children submissive to authorities and disciplined (Hatemalo Sanchar, 2004). The study shows that incidences of stringent punishment of children in Nepalese schools are on the rise. The schools' custodians consider the punishment "reasonable" for "correction" (ibid). It is not only teachers who encourage corporal punishment, but many-a-times even the parents have insisted the teachers to use corporal punishment in school to reform their children's manners (ibid). The study conducted by Hatemalo Sanchar (2004) in schools of Kathmandu showed that a huge majority of students are subjected to punishment at schools. The students, who were the respondents of the study, revealed that punishment for them was not only physical pain but also psychological distress as a result of misconduct (ibid).

### 4) Bullying:

There is a lack of statistics of bullying in Nepal due to the scarcity of research in the field (Rana N. , 2008). Rana N. (2008) states that it is probably because the concerned professionals are insensitive to the problem and therefore carry out no research. She highlights the statement by Besag (1989) that until there is little research, professionals will remain ill-informed. Further, she states that schools are afraid to admit to bullying as their reputation will be damaged and even children are reluctant to admit to bullying as they fear the consequences and moreover do not have faith that it will be solved (Rana T. , 2012). According to research studies, bullying is regarded the most predominant form of aggression and affects the largest number of students in comparison to other forms of violence (Ross, 2002 – as cited by Rana N., 2008).

### 5) Pedagogical strategy:

Ministry of Education has declared that almost all the teachers at present are trained through effective teaching strategies given by GOs, NGOs, and INGOs. Notwithstanding, these learned things are not transformed into the real classroom due to lack of teaching materials and teacher's motivation. Till now, teachers are solely depended upon lecture teaching method. Exclusion and disparity based on gender and caste are culturally reproduced through traditional pedagogical approaches which further decrease the interaction between elite and disadvantaged groups of society. Moreover, in Nepalese classroom, students are made to memorize and write in exams, but for those who cannot memorize do not score good marks because creativity and own writing skills are criticized. (Parajuli & Das, Performance of Community Schools in Nepal: A Macro Level Analysis, 2013)

## **3.4) Projects in Nepal to improve learning environment in schools**

There are many local and international organizations working in the sector of education. The projects implemented focusing on the diverse sector of education has supported to uplift the

education sector in Nepal. Some of the projects in Nepal aiming to eradicate various issues in education are mentioned below:

1) Better Classrooms, Better Learning

Global Action Nepal (GAN), a Non-Government Organization (NGO), has been working with other organizations including the government, the British Council and the Pahar Trust in implementing the program – Better Classrooms Better Learning (BCBL). The program believes that better learning opportunities can only be created through better classroom practices. In order to achieve this, GAN focuses its endeavors on supporting the development of teaching and learning in community schools in unreached areas. (Global Action Nepal, n.d.). The main project activities and outcomes are:

- Supporting the improvement of teacher's classroom performance in order to develop the skills and knowledge required to be good teachers
- Developing the capacity of local government "resource persons" (local education trainers) and head teachers to cascade the learning to the teachers in the schools
- Decreasing the prevalence of issues connected to high drop-out rates, such as poor learning outcomes, corporal punishment, inappropriate teaching methodology, teacher absenteeism and so on

2) Child Mental Health Program

Center for Mental Health and Counselling- Nepal is implementing Child Mental Health Program in two districts with the funding support from Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission. The program promotes mental health and psychosocial well-being of children and adolescents for quality learning. This program mainly focuses on improving classroom behavioral management, empowering the parents & stakeholders for their involvement in school activities, the practice of positive disciplinary approach and student listening unit (school counseling) for the safe & respectful learning environment. It also aims to integrate this approach with the government education systems at central level through advocacy & lobbying. (CMC-Nepal, n.d.)

3) Bullying in Schools:

Rakshya Nepal is the very first social organization that works in the field of school bullying. The organization raises awareness, disseminates information and promotes research in this area to decrease victims' behaviors, in addition to establishing a suitable relationship with parents and peers. The organization has also promoted research on school bullying at the Bachelors, Masters and even Ph.D. level by giving research grants. (Rana N. , 2008)

4) Dealing with Child Sexual Abuse:

CWIN is a NGO helping to rescue and protect children at risk of sexual violence, abuse, and exploitation. CWIN's 24-hour emergency service called Child Helpline, which helps vulnerable children, has been receiving more calls from victims to help rescue them from being abused and raped on a regular basis. (IRIN, 2008). It provides shelter, medical care, legal aid, counseling,

adolescent education, and skills training to survivor girls and boys and works for their empowerment (CWIN & UNICEF, 2005).

Despite all the efforts, the problems are still existent, as a result, most of the students are unable to gain the maximum learning outcome. It is also observed that there is a scarcity of direct initiation from school level to solve the problems. In this context, School Social Worker can be an effectual recourse. School social work practices have a broad perspective on student problems to focus on their social life circumstances as well as their school based conditions. This perspective arises from social work's theoretical base which addresses 'person-in-environment', systems and ecological systems. (Calis & Calis, 2015). Moreover, School Social Worker can also mediate between the school and the project to ensure utmost productivity.

#### **4) Research Framework**

##### **4.1) Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the research is to figure out the features of schools in Nepal in comparison to the content and function of school social work. One of the major attributes of school social work practice is building a connection between home, school, and community and reinforcing it to enhance student learning outcomes and school effectiveness. This research aims to discover the relation Jana Udaya school maintains with the parents as well as the community members and organizations. In addition, the school endeavors in forming parental and community involvement including the initiatives from parents and community will be examined. The roles and contribution of School Management Committee (SMC) and Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) will also be explored.

According to the Child-friendly Schools Manual prepared by UNICEF (2009), the effective teaching-learning environment enhances classroom participation, creates space for children to express their views and opinions, helps children learn to follow rules and enriches the overall classroom experience. Further, teaching-learning environment should be enjoyable, stimulating, inspiring and attractive. Taking this into consideration, the study will investigate the teaching-learning environment in Jana Udaya School, its execution, impact, evaluation and its downside.

Moreover, the supportive and effective school environment is essential for quality schooling and quality education. Thus, this research will investigate the school environment with an emphasis on school infrastructures, school systems, school facilities including the relationship between the teachers and the students. Besides, this research also intends to discover the problems that the students face which obstructs their capability and potentiality to achieve school outcomes. In addition, this research targets to determine the platform the students receive and the comfort they feel in sharing their problems, feelings, and emotions at school as well as at home. Subsequently, the problem-solving measures adopted by the school will be explored.

This research also targets to scrutinize the existence of discrimination, corporal punishment, and bullying which are the general problems in schools in Nepal. After the analysis, if the

problems are found to be prevailing, constructive alternative intervention strategies will be recommended.

Overall, this study concentrates on determining the need of School Social Worker in the schools of Nepal. Based on the analysis obtained, I will propose the potential role of School Social Worker and possible intervention strategies to enhance school effectiveness and refine student outcomes.

## **4.2) Statement of Problem**

The school is the place where the children and adolescents spend most of their time. After family, school impacts their lives largely. The experiences that a child gains, the feelings they have, their achievements and failures all can have an enduring effect on his or her self-image and future life course. On top of that, the relationship that the child maintains with his or her peers as well as with the school administrators can either help or obstruct their social as well as emotional development. Due to its lasting positive or negative impact, what happens to a child in school is very serious and crucial and hence demands our efforts to create a positive outcome. (Openshaw, 2008).

The primary mission of schools to educate students has been challenged by environmental effects like poverty, emotional stress, abuse, behavioral problems, and psychopathology (Adelman & Taylor, 1996; Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Streeter & Franklin, 2002) (as cited by White, 2008). So is the case in schools in Nepal. Poverty is the factor which prevents families from sending their children to school and it acts as a catalyst for dropout (Thapa S. B., 2013). It is also observed that both the non-enrollment and drop-out rates are higher among the poorest sections of the population compared to the richer sections (ibid).

The schools and the students of Nepal face diverse problems which inhibit forging effective teaching-learning environment. This ultimately degrades the quality of education and reduces the chances of children succeeding in school. A survey of Nepal Human Development Report in 1998 revealed that 63 percent of students dropped out of school before the completion of primary grade and another 27 percent dropped out from the lower secondary level. Corporal punishment and verbal humiliation were the major causes of the high dropout rates. Moreover, as many as 14% of children claim to have dropped out of school due to the fear of their teachers. Gender violence has also been attributed as a cause of poor performance and students dropping out. (Mishra, et al., 2010).

The motivation of the children and their ability to learn both are hindered by harsh discipline measures. As a result, it leaves them in a vicious cycle of low achievement, repetition, rejection, behavioral and emotional disturbances, as well as experiences of violence from the community, teacher and peer (Mishra, et al., 2010). The psychological repercussions of abuse can trump the physical ones, causing students to avoid teachers and to skip school (Gautam, 2013). While political stagnation has stalled a bill against school abuse, some parents say increased communication with teachers can improve behavioral issues (ibid).

Besides corporal punishment, sexual abuse in school going children is rampant in our society. It is not uncommon in media to hear that teachers and near relatives being the abusers. A research published in 2006, conducted in four districts of Nepal by UNICEF and CWIN, found that nearly 18 percent out of the 4,100 students had experienced contact sexual abuse, among which 17.6% occurring in school and among non-contact form obscene language was most common 44.5%, followed by obscene materials in 28.8%. (Mishra, et al., 2010)

These problems underline the risk at school which lead to a detrimental school climate. A review of school climate research concluded that "sustained positive school climate is associated with positive child and youth development, effective risk-prevention and health-promotion efforts, student learning and academic achievement, increased student graduation rates, and teacher retention." (Thapa, Cohen, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013)

There are ample of governmental and non-governmental organizations putting upon efforts to mitigate these problems and establish effective school climate. However, the rates of drop out, sexual abuse, corporal punishment and other related problems have not declined remarkably.

Even the School Management Committees in Nepal are facing complications; specifically, because the members are either handpicked by bureaucrats or politicians. The true parents and the local community members are rarely given any chances to represent the committee (UNESCO Nepal, n.d.). A study conducted by Khanal (2013) concluded that while the policy has created legitimate spaces for community participation in school, participation in such spaces is taking a form of tokenism, and the community represented in school governance is restricted to a small number of political elites. Given that ethnic, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic characteristic of the local populace, problems exist within the school system to embrace differences and diversities that prevent most parents from effective participation in school. This setting underlines the feeble home school community liaison in Nepal.

School Social Workers work to make the education process effective (Constable, 2008). They help the students by addressing problems that hinder their ability to function and gain academic progress in school (Bye, Shepard, Partridge, & Alvarez, 2009). They can deal with the problems of students and schools by working collaboratively with the student, their family, school, and community and thus surge the positive school outcome among students and strengthen the nexus of systems of home, school and community.

The schools of Nepal deficit the position of a School Social Worker; moreover, the concept of School Social Worker itself is outlandish. Providing education remains to be the focal point of the schools, with least focus on improving the education delivery methods and psychological development of students. The majority of the problem-solving mechanism is confined to a surface level intervention leading to a continual reoccurrence of the issues. The measures targeted to tackle with deep-rooted causes of the problems are deficient. Although schools have succeeded in ensuring to maintain its positive reputation and satisfactory academic performance of the students, the concentration on proper growth and development of student along with the active participation of parents and community is minimal.

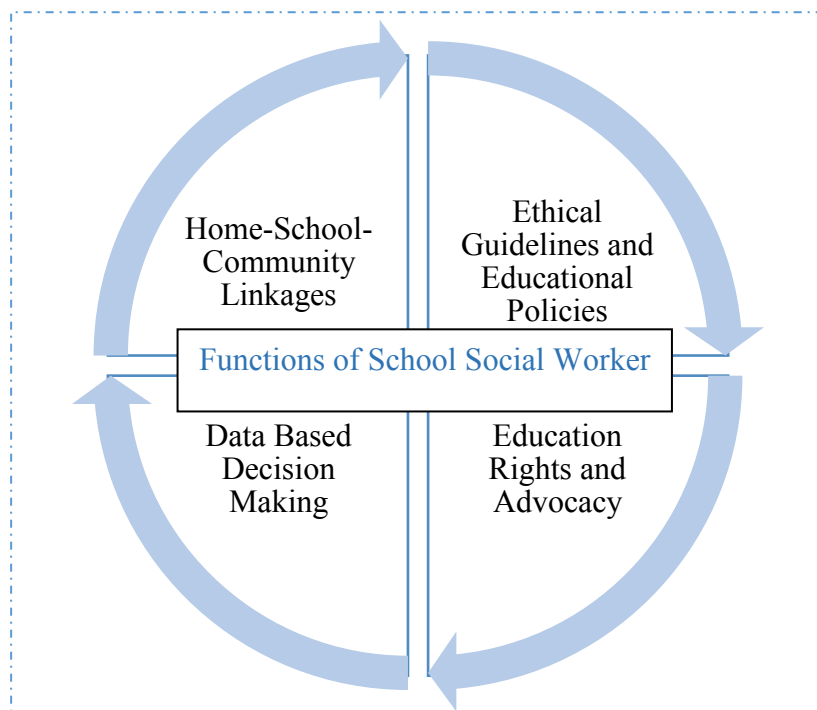
As schools have been incompetent in considering students to be the cornerstone of school and in implementing practices focusing on the best interest of the child, the need of School Social Worker is ever increasing.

### 4.3) Research Question and Research Framework

Is it possible to find elements and features of school social work in the everyday practice of the school?

The elements and features design the framework of this research (Figure 2), which is derived from the three dimensions of the School Social Work Practice Model developed by SSWAA:

- 1) Home-School-Community linkage
- 2) Ethical Guidelines and Educational Policy
- 3) Education Rights and Advocacy



<b>Key Constructs</b>	Provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services
	Promote a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence
	Maximize access to school-based and community-based resources

*Figure 2 Research Framework derived from School Social Work Practice Model*

The School Social Work model underlines the role of School Social Workers, the knowledge and skills they should possess, and the key constructs which the School Social Workers should contemplate and integrate while functioning in the schools. These key constructs offer different school aspects to this research to focus on while investigating the school environment and its operation without School Social Worker.

As the model indicates, the School Social Worker needs to provide proven education, behavior, and mental health services with the aim to support educational and behavioral outcomes. They also deal with the hindrance to educational success present in the school and community. While doing so, the School Social Workers assist the school personnel in the ethical implementation of the interventions.

One of the major focuses of the School Social Worker should be facilitating communication and promoting the connection between home, school and community settings. Within this sector, the School Social Worker may also coordinate the services available within the school system and community to secure and reinforce the services they provide. The model highlights that to deliver optimum school social work service, they should follow ethical guidelines and carry out educational policy. Also, the School Social Worker requires one to keep updated with the evidence-based practices and focus on professional development. Besides, their role is to eliminate the structural inequalities and school processes impacting the school quality and educational outcomes. This also includes ensuring that the school policies are conducive to the effective teaching-learning environment and do not undermine the dignity and worth of students.

These dimensions of the model will assist the researcher in determining the effectiveness of school environment through school policies and school system, exploring the school-home-community liaison, and inspecting the role of School Social Worker in strengthening the school functions.

## **5) Data, Data Collection Process and Data Analysis**

### **5.1) Qualitative Research**

Carey (2012) refers to qualitative research as involving purposeful investigations, searches or processes that collect and evaluate information to gain knowledge and understanding. Basically, it identifies the research problem and then leads to planning and use of skills, methods, and theory to systematically investigate a social problem or answer a research question. On the one hand, quantitative research underlines the accumulation of large-scale objective 'facts', scientific rigor, generalization, explanation and prediction; on the other hand, qualitative research prioritizes meaning and understanding.

This research uses the qualitative method to understand the school endeavors in establishing favorable school climate to providing quality of education and collaboration with parents and community in doing so. Further, the research also investigates the ways school employs in



tackling the hindrances in the social context of the student causing academic underachievement and mental, behavioral difficulty.

Further, Denzin (1970) notes that the focus of qualitative research is on exploring and understanding the subject matter or people from the perspective of those we are seeking to study and from where they are currently located. It infers that before making judgments, assumptions or drawing conclusions, we might look at a persons' background, where they live, study or work, including their relationships, status, ethnicity, gender and role in an organization. Similarly, the research adopts this method to comprehend the school environment from the viewpoint of students, teachers as well as parents. To analyze the data collected, the socioeconomic background of the respondents will be considered as it influences the perspectives they hold including the situations and problems they encounter.

According to Yin (2011), qualitative research strives to gather, integrate and present data from diverse sources of evidence as part of any given study. Consistent with the literature, this research supports as well as compares the data collected from the respondents with the inferences and results from various related books, research papers, journals, articles, and websites. Significantly, the research will also scrutinize the data from the school social work standpoint and ultimately offer concepts on tackling the challenges through school social work intervention strategies.

## **5.2) Selection of Study Area**

The study area for this research is one of the government schools located in Lalitpur District, Nepal. To choose the study area, I contacted Global Action Nepal (GAN), a dynamic educational and social development organization working for the marginalized children in Nepal. I approached the organization for support in finding the suitable study area and to provide guidance during data collection phase. Research Proposal, as well as the Questionnaire, was submitted to the organization.

Considering the research objective, GAN Research and Learning Resource Centre proposed Shree Jana Udaya Secondary School as the study area. GAN submitted a letter to the school requesting them to help me in conducting the research study (See Annex 1). Then, I communicated with the School Principal and explained about the research and the data collection requirements. The principal expressed the need to conduct such research as it will extract the viewpoints of the students, parents, and teachers about the services they obtain from school. Also, the school will know about the strengths and aspects for improvements. The principal permitted me to conduct research in the school, under the condition that I will not disturb any of the teacher's as well as student's class hours. Further, I was allowed to set time with the respondents as per the consensus. I should also submit the final research copy to the school as well as the organization. The support and guidance provided by the organization and the school are highly appreciated.

### 5.3) Background of the Study Area

#### Shree Jana Udaya Secondary School

Shree Jana Udaya Secondary School was established in 1959 A.D. (2016 B.S.) by the community people discerning the need and importance of education. The school is in Sainbu Village Development Committee, Bhaisepati, Lalitpur District. The school building was constructed with Earthquake-Resistant retro filling technology in 2007. With the support from



Rotary Club of Kasthamandap, Nepal and Rotary Clubs of Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan, a hall was built within the school premises known as “Miteri Hall”. This hall is used by the school to conduct different programs. Also, this hall is available for use by the community members and organizations.

The school runs classes from Early Childhood Development Classes to class 10. This government school has around 405 students and 19 teachers. With the emphasis on systematizing the school activities, the school has formed 4 committees: Examination and Monitoring Committee, Discipline Committee, Scholarship Committee and Extra-Curricular Activities Committee. Each committee has their own Work Guidelines. At present, all the committees are led by female teachers. The school also comprises of Child Club where the students from grade 4 till 9 are involved. The child club conducts numerous programs annually, such as the celebration of festivals, children’s day, teacher’s day, including cultural programs, dance programs, and diverse competitions.

The students of this school belong to low-income families. Some of them are domestic workers and most of their parents are in villages and the students are under the care of the guardians<sup>2</sup>. Also, some of the students are orphans, hence living in hostels and taken care by guardians. The parents of the majority of the other students are daily wage earners with limited free time. This situation has hindered the formation of an effective relationship between the parents and the school including the active involvement of parents in the school. As most of the students of this school hold such background, the community sends their children to other schools. Hence, community participation in school activities and their concern over the school issues are minimal.

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<sup>2</sup> Guardians, in this research study, refer to the employers for whom the children work for as well as the wardens of the hostels where the children are living.

Despite all these conditions, the school has advanced impressively. Existing in the country where the government schools have not yet established as a strong educational institution, Jana Udaya School has been working remarkably. The overall management of the school has improved with time. All the students wear proper school uniform, dangle identity card, reach and leave school on time, have fixed class schedules. Also, the school has installed water filtration system to provide safe drinking water, with the help of different organizations. Initially, it only provided education till grade 3. Then, the school served as a primary school till grade 8 for a long time and now have been established as a secondary school till grade 10. Further, the school targets to impart education to even higher levels: grade 11 and 12. This shows that the school is still struggling to achieve greater heights. Meanwhile, there are many more aspects in which the school needs to thrive. Few of the major aspects are strengthening the home school community liaison, focusing on the growth and development of the students and reinforcing the teaching-learning environment.

### **5.3.1) Daily School Operation**

I visited the school for three weeks in February 2017. The school days are from Sunday to Friday and starts from 10 am until 4 pm. The school day starts with a school assembly at 9:45 am where all students line up with their classmates, height-wise in ascending order. Each line is led by either house-captain or class monitor. All the teachers and school staffs attend the school



*Figure 3 Students and Teachers gathered up for School Assembly*

assembly (Figure 3). The assembly is conducted by the President of Child Club. It starts with warm-up sessions, where the students are to do light exercises as instructed, which is followed by National Anthem. Then the house captains or class monitors are asked to perform hygiene check-up of their respective lines. Nails, school uniform and haircut are basically inspected. In case of the students who do not have maintained the proper hygiene, they are called separately by teachers and talked to for improvements next time. Subsequently, all the students are asked to go to their respective classes maintaining the line. Any announcements, substantial information is also delivered during the school assembly considering the presence of everyone during the assembly.

Each class is 40 minutes in length. After first two classes, there is 10 minutes' break, which is often utilized as a bathroom break. The break is followed by two 40 minutes' class and then is the lunch break for 30 minutes. End of each class and break times are indicated by ringing a bell, a traditional one where a big metal circle is hit by a stick. The school does not have a

canteen, hence the students, as well as the staffs, go to the street food vendors or nearby local shops serving food, which is usually referred to as hotels.

Lunch break is followed by two 40-minute classes after that is 10 minutes' break. Subsequently, there are two 40-minute classes and then the school hours are over for the day. Hence, there are eight 40-minute classes every day, besides Saturday, public holidays and school vacations.

#### **5.4) Selection procedure and details of the respondents**

In the case of selection of the respondents, the principal initially suggested me to go to the staff room and talk to the teachers about the research and ask if they would be interested to provide the required information. I followed the instruction and one of the teachers said he was interested. Hence, the first respondent was selected randomly, based on the respondent's enthusiasm in the research. Then after, the other two teacher respondents were recommended by the principal, considering their long tenure in the school and the number of classes they teach in, ensuring wider standpoint.

When I held the first interview with the teacher, the existence of child club in the school was noted. Thereafter, I decided to interview the president and secretary of the child club as they represent the students of the school. The remaining three respondents were selected based on the roll number of the students, as per the principal's recommendation. By the end, I had the student respondents belonging to different caste, ethnicity, financial and social background.

Regarding the selection of parents, I held the objective for one of the respondents to be associated with PTA or SMC or both, as PTA and SMC are one of the major aspects of the research. One of the teacher respondents proposed a parent who was a president of PTA and currently the member of SMC. Luckily, the parent was available to give an interview. As for the remaining respondents, I aimed to interview parents of the student respondents', as the same situation at school and at home could be regarded from student's and parent's viewpoint. Nonetheless, I could only get in contact with one of the parents. When I visited one of the other student respondent's house to approach the parent for an interview, the parent responded that they were very busy looking after the shop and they will not be able to manage time for an interview. The student of the respective parent was quite disappointed for their parent's unavailability. Notwithstanding, I informed the student that it was not a problem as there are alternatives and thanked the student and parents for their time and consideration. Two of the other student respondents are living in an orphanage. And one of the student respondents conveyed that their parents have busy schedule to allocate time for an interview.

Therefore, I informed the principal and the teacher respondents about the difficulty to contact parents for an interview. They suggested approaching a parent who lived nearby and mostly is willing to give time for school activities. Finally, I got hold of this parent respondent, based on his availability. Moreover, the parent had two of his generations admitted to this school and hence the information along the time frame could be collected.

### **5.5) Interviews, recordings, and transcriptions**

For the data collection, I interviewed teachers (n=3), parents (n=3) and students (n=5) with a total of 11 respondents (Figure 4, p.33). Among the teachers, two are male and one female; Teacher A (Male) has been teaching in this school for 4 years, Teacher B (Male) for 17 years and Teacher C (Female) for 7 years. In the case of students, two are female and three are male; two students are aged 14 years, two are 16 years and one is 13 years old. Student A (female) is the secretary of the Child Club, Student B (male) is the president of the Child Club and Student C (female), D (male) and E (male) are the members of Child Club. Also, Student A, B, and C are students of Grade 9 and Student D and E are students of grade 8. All the students belonged to different economic levels and family background. It is helpful to analyze how the same facility, situation, personnel, and the environment is perceived by students of different level and groups.

Regarding the parents, two are female and one is male. Parent A (female) was the President of PTA and at present is the member of SMC. Parent A has two of her children admitted to this school. Parent B (female) is the elder sister of Student A. Parent C (male) is the grandfather of a student at this school. All his children including his grandchildren studied in this school.

This research utilized semi-structured interview as data collection tools. In semi-structured interviewing, a guide is used, with questions and topics that must be covered (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The interviewer has some discretion about the order in which questions are asked, but the questions are standardized, and probes may be provided to ensure that the researcher covers the correct material. This kind of interview collects detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational. It allows the interviewer to ask spontaneous questions in response to a respondents' answer or body language; it also allows the interviewer to ask for clarifications from the respondents (Carey, 2012). Semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

I formulated questions based on School Social Work Practice Model which focuses on the key constructs: (a) home-school-community linkage, (b) ethical guidelines and educational policy, (c) education rights and advocacy, and (d) data-based decision-making (Frey, et al., 2013). However, the questions are focused on first three constructs and the construct – data based decision making is excluded. The verdict was made because this construct refers to using current research to design and implement interventions to establish proper school environment. As the questions under this construct will be more professional, and as there are no School Social Workers in schools in Nepal, it is irrelevant to inquire the respondents who are oblivious about the school social work profession.

Before conducting the interview, I introduced myself to the respondents and described the research and the research objectives. This helped the respondents gain brief information about the research and to some extent figure out the type of questions that will be asked. Subsequently,

I asked other relevant questions as one feasible way of starting conversing with the respondents, which Spradley (1979) identifies as ‘Grand Tour’ questions. One of the motives of ‘grand tour’ questions is to give a rich start to the interview leading to the respondents avoiding short answers and responding expansively and comfortably (Yin, 2011). For instance, in the case of a parent who was president of PTA, I started the interview with questions related to PTA functioning and contributions during her tenure.

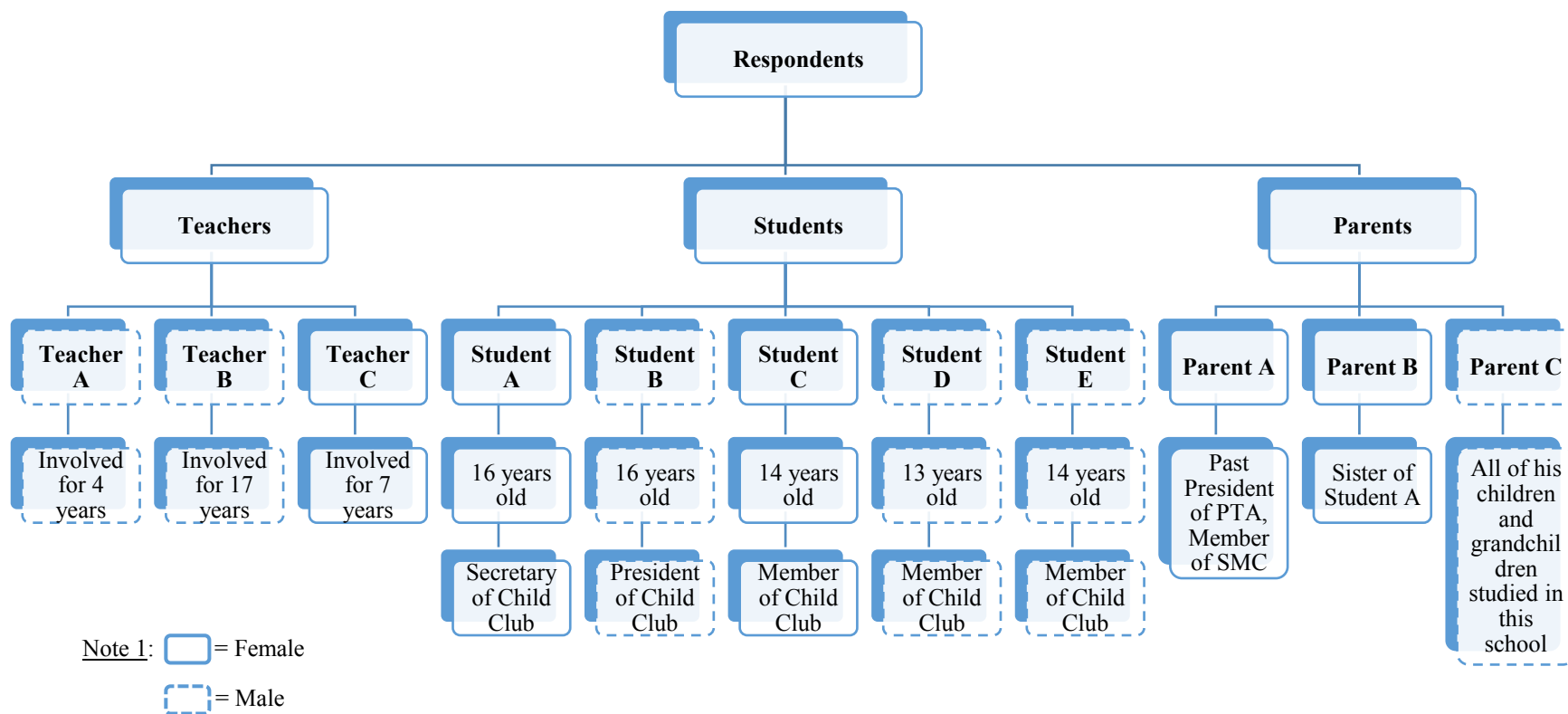
All the interviews were recorded in a voice recorder. The recorder allows the interviewer to concentrate on listening and responding to the participant, restraining from the distraction to write the detailed notes (Stuckey, 2013). Prior to the interview, all the respondents were asked for their permission to record the entire interview. The permission was given by all respondents. Also, I ensured that the recorder was functioning properly throughout the interview and the sound it recorded was clear and understandable.

The questionnaire was in English, nonetheless, I translated the questionnaire to Nepali for the respondent’s convenience. As the number of questions was quite many, the length of the interview was one of the major challenges during data collection. The respondents were informed about the estimated interview span beforehand. The minimum length of the interview was 55 minutes and the maximum was approximately 2 hours. Besides, the respondents were interviewed at different times. The teachers were interviewed during their leisure time in school hours, for which I considered the teacher’s class schedule followed by consultation with the teachers themselves. In the case of the students, the interviews were mainly scheduled before and after the school hours. All parents were interviewed during school hours. Also, especially in the case of teachers and students, interviews were conducted in two rounds to get the complete interview because of their busy schedule. However, the parents had exceptional cases as the interviews were taken in one attempt. All the respondents were very cooperative in allocating their time for the interview.

During the interviews, some of the respondents answered the questions before I asked them, through other relatable questions. In such cases, I skipped few questions. Notwithstanding, when the respondents gave incomplete responses or responses that required more explanation, I used probes. Yin (2011) states that the researcher can make use of probes and follow-up questions in situations when the respondents provide insightful comments but are shorter than desired. Using of probes and follow-up questions will stimulate the respondent to explain the original comment in detail.

As the interviews were taken in Nepal, I started transcribing the data only after a week of arriving back in Finland. I transcribed every interview for the data analysis. Describing transcribing as an interpretive act rather than a mere technical process, Bailey (2008) states that transcription comprises of repeated careful listening resulting in close observation of data, which is a crucial initial step in data analysis. Listening to the interviews and transcribing it allowed me to gain familiarity with the data and comprehend the depth of information collected.

Because of the length of the interviews and the number of respondents, it took quite some time for me to transcribe the interviews. Nevertheless, I transcribed the verbal content alone and not the features of talk such as emphasis, speed, the tone of voice, timing and pauses (Bailey, 2008). Besides, while transcribing, when I found anything interesting, significant and distinctive, I noted the responses along with my views towards the responses. I also realized the challenge in finding the exact translation from the Nepali word to English. In such cases, I referred to the best suitable word translation. Further, I have given my best in maintaining the anonymity of the respondents.



*Figure 4 The details of respondents of the research*

**Note 2:** The teacher respondents, parent respondents and student respondents of this research will simply be referred to as teachers, parents and students throughout the report.



## 5.6) Data Analysis Plan

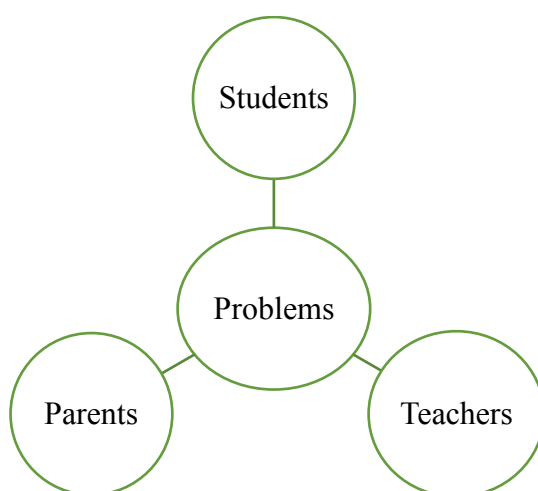
Qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of people and situations we are investigating (Haregu, 2012).

### 5.6.1) Triangulation method and comparative analysis

Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives (Guion, 2002). Drisko (2015) states that triangulation in social science refers to efforts to corroborate or support the understanding of an experience, a meaning, or a process by using multiple sources or types of data, multiple methods of data collection, and/or multiple analytic or interpretive approaches.

Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) identified four types of triangulation: (a) method triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) data source triangulation. According to Patton (1999), data source triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, BlytheJ, & Neville, 2014). In this method, the key strategy is to categorize each group or type of stakeholder for the program one is evaluating (Guion, 2002). It is significant to comprise a comparable number of people from each stakeholder group in the evaluation study.

This research utilized data triangulation method for designing questions as well as data analysis. The questions were formulated based on School Social Work Practice Model. Students, parents, and teachers were asked series of same open-ended questions intended to elicit their views on parental and community involvement, school environment, teaching-learning environment, problems faced by students, bullying, corporal punishment, academic problems, and the school endeavor in formulating conducive learning environment at school.



*Figure 5 Utilization of data triangulation method for designing questions and data analysis*

Guest et.al (2012) outlines that the most basic comparative approach in qualitative data analysis is to note themes present in the text from each group being compared and determine

which themes are the same and which are different. As this research follows the data triangulation method, the analysis is conducted through comparative approach as well. The retorts collected from students, teachers, and parents are analyzed individually and comparisons are made amongst the similar views or varying views from the respondents on same issues. In cases where the respondents have diverse outlook regarding the same issue, those issues are marked and the reasons behind those diverse outlooks are scrutinized.

### **5.6.2) Exploratory Thematic Analysis**

Guest, MacQueen, & Namey (2012) states that exploratory analysis is the classic content-driven, inductive approach which is mostly linked with qualitative research. In an exploratory analysis, the emphasis is on what emerges from the interaction between the researcher and respondent. The content of the interaction then leads to the development of codes and identification of themes. The success level of the analysis highly depends upon the skill and sophistication of those collecting the data. If the data lack richness and nuance, the analysis will similarly be lacking. Thus, in exploratory data analysis, it is crucial to hold quality checks with the aim to ensure that what emerges is likely more or less inclusive of what may have potentially emerged. (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012)

For this research, I formulated questions based on key constructs of School Social Work Practice Model to ensure the collection of comprehensive and detailed information from the respondents. The theme based questions assisted me in maintaining opposite presentation of data leading to an effective discussion of results as well as findings. This approach is pillared by the description of themes given by Ryan and Bernard (2003) - themes come both from the data (an inductive approach) and from the investigator's prior theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study (an a priori approach).

A priori themes come from the characteristics of the phenomenon being studied; from already agreed on professional definitions found in literature reviews; from local, common sense constructs; and from researcher's values, theoretical orientations, and personal experiences (Bulmer 1979; Strauss 1987; Maxwell 1996). Strauss and Corbin (1990:41–47) called this theoretical sensitivity. Investigators' decisions about what topics to cover and how best to query informants about those topics are a rich source of a priori themes (Dey 1993:98). In fact, the first pass at generating themes often comes from the questions in an interview protocol (Coffey and Atkinson 1996:34). (as cited by Ryan & Bernard, 2003)

Jana Udaya school – the study area of this research does not have a School Social Worker. Indeed, the concept of school social work is new in the context of Nepal. This study hence aims to reflect the situation of the school without School Social Worker. I explore the daily operation of the school and focus on prime aspects of school such as home-school-community liaison, classroom management, teaching-learning practices, extracurricular activities, school policies, decision-making process, punishment policy, teacher-student-parent relationship, communication pattern, and bullying. By interrogating about the problems in the schools, this study explores the existing problems and analyzes the problem-solving method the school has been implementing. Following that, I evaluate how the School Social Worker can enhance the school environment to differently realize and handle issues

impinging the school effectiveness and student outcomes. Henceforth, I analyze the functions of School Social Worker in the schools in Nepal.

## **6) Home School Community Linkage**

*“School Social Workers are generally hired by school districts to augment the district’s ability to meet its academic mission, significantly where home, school and community collaboration is essential to achieving the mission.” (SSWAA, 2003)*

One of the core responsibilities of School Social Workers is to develop, maintain and reinforce the connection between the home, school, and community. School Social Workers fathom and respect the fact that such connection is productive for the children, parents, teachers as well as community members. Also, the involvement of families and community conveys that school is crucial and the attendance of the children in the school and the knowledge and skills they gain is worthy of adult attention (Davis, 2000).

Schools that engage families in their children’s learning are drawing out the rich source of information and expertise (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government). The home-school partnership enables forming better programs, opportunities and learning for students. Moreover, the linkage provides a relevant platform for the families to be instrumental in school decision-making. Besides, when the schools maintain proper relation with the community, the students will experience the benefits from community leaders as mentors, participate in community cultural or recreational activities, and receive support in tackling with family and/or personal problems. Additionally, the connection between school and community enables the community to identify with and be supportive of their schools. As a result, they can together work towards providing quality of education to the students. Also, community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities (Purinto & Azcoitia, 2016).

However, establishing and boosting the nexus between home-school-community is a daunting task. It requires commitment, dedication and investment of time. Due to the various circumstances and pressures, many families and community will need special arrangements, or extra support, to enable them to become actively involved in children’s school lives, and to help children get the most from school. (Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau Australia)

### **6.1) Elements**

#### **6.1.1) Level of Linkage**

Many studies have concluded that high levels of parental and community involvement lead to effective schools, generally because the involvement brings out enhanced student learning, attendance, and behavior. The collaboration of school, family, and community results in enhanced student achievement, family health, school success and community development. Thus, the school should endeavor in engaging both parents and community which should be well planned and implemented properly. Ideas should be gathered from parents as well as communities in designing school programs and activities considering the best interest of the child.

Primarily, in Jana Udaya School, school administration and SMC is involved in developing the schools' plan and programs whereas PTA is conferred with moderately. The respondents remarked that consultation with wider community and parents is absent. Although the parents are invited to meetings and asked for suggestions, the suggestions limit to documents and are not implemented. In my opinion, at times, the suggestions provided do not comply with the school code of conduct or are beyond the capacity of the school. Thus, it is crucial for the school to convey its regulations and limitations beforehand to make the parents and community aware of the scenario. Additionally, some suggestions might require more time and commitment, not only from school but from parents as well as community members. Such necessity should be communicated effectively and the roles and responsibilities should be defined clearly. The school should also impart the reason for not addressing the suggestions from parents and community members.

When respondents were inquired about the encouragement from school for parental and community involvement, all respondents shared similar views beside a teacher. The teacher responded that the school does not stimulate parental and community involvement. Although parents are invited for programs, inviting parents is taken as a compulsion and not viewed as a fundamental initiative. Nonetheless, students agreed that the school realizes the significance of involving parents and other respondents commented that parents are frequently invited to school programs and meetings but only the parents who have time attend such events. Students reasoned that parents skip school programs also because some of them do not hold the opinion that they should be engaged in school events whereas others do not care about participating.

The responses infer the necessity for both school and parents to comprehend the signification of parental involvement. As both school and parents are highly responsible towards the students, they should work closely for the betterment of the child. Importantly in this school where most of the parents are daily-wage earners, until and unless they know that their time, efforts and contribution is helping their child to grow and develop in a best possible way, they will not compromise their time. Under such circumstance, School Social Worker can conduct home visits to learn about the families as well as the environments where they live and support school and parents in establishing and thriving the engagement of parents in the school. Also, the school should "offer a broad range of activities to encourage support and participation, including non-threatening, low-commitment opportunities" (Vandelgrift & Greene, 1992).

As parents and community members are experts in diverse fields, their knowledge and experiences can be shared with the students through numerous learning activities. There might be parents who are willing to share their knowledge of occupations, travel, skills, and hobbies. For instance, if the class is about ethnicity and culture, parents belonging to different ethnicity and culture can be invited to share their norms, values, lifestyle and so on. By inviting parents to volunteer, the school conveys that the parents are wanted, needed, and welcomed at school. When parents volunteer in the classroom, their children feel proud and feel that the course is significant enough (Giganti, 2011). Besides, working with children will teach parents about how children learn and how to explain the same idea in different

ways, also such participation will illuminate the strengths and limitations of their own child (ibid).

However, there is no record of such level of participation by parents in Jana Udaya school. A teacher expressed that it is either because the parents are not aware that they should be involved in learning activities and share their knowledge or perhaps such trend has not started yet. But a parent shared that it is an effective concept as students will gain some knowledge from parents as well. Likewise, a student commented that it will be helpful for students if parents help them with studies. As both parents and students feel enthusiastic about the engagement of parents in learning activities leading to enriching student performance, it will be more convenient for teachers to reach out to parents for volunteering in the classroom. School Social Workers can assist the teachers and parents in enhancing their capacity to make the involvement effective and meaningful.

Underlining most parents limited educational background, a teacher said that if not in helping child academically, the parents can contribute by creating favorable environment at home and allocating time for playing and studying. Likewise, a teacher shared about suggesting the parents to encourage students to study at home as well to spend some quality time with the children. A parent affirmed giving their best in establishing effective learning environment at home for their children- having a separate learning space to study and helping children with studies during morning and evening. The parent even expressed about avoiding fighting in front of the children to prevent impingement upon them in any way.

The more the parents get involved and learn about the school, the more they can help the student (LaBahn, 1995). The parents are able to "increase their understanding of child development in areas of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development" (Gelfer, 1991); this helps to provide a bond between home experiences and the educational program. Parents are better able to offer a more positive and exciting home environment when they understand how the child develops (LaBahn, 1995).

Notwithstanding, there are many difficulties that the parents go through challenging them to manage everything. Although parents want to provide rich, supportive learning environment and opportunities for social interaction for their children, this can be less realistic for low-income families to achieve as compared to families with a higher socioeconomic status (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Heymann & Earle, 2016).

Besides, the resources available in the community should be harnessed by the school to enhance the quality of education and the learning environment. On one hand, the students will get dynamic, interesting and real-life opportunities for learning and on the other hand, they will learn the ways to employ the community resources and the possibility of intertwining them to achieving goals or solving problems. In Jana Udaya School, the students are taken for trips to museums and industries. A teacher shared about taking students for a visit to the police department to learn about their roles, responsibilities as well as lifestyle. Students expressed that out of such educational trips, they practically see and observe things and are also able to make the connection between theories and real world hence making learning better and effective.

Such education trips can diversify the range of learning opportunities, establishes the sense of engagement with the real world and confirms the pertinence of the curriculum. The field observations can further be discussed in the classroom and the students can share their experiences and learning and further learn how other students perceived the similar scenario.

Moreover, a student noted that school is regularly using the community ground as a school playground and for organizing school events. According to a teacher, the school building is labeled as a community building and is available to organize programs by the community and the community organizations. The school is in the community and is the property of the community. However, besides materialistic, there is no other substantial connection between this school and the community. A student commented that more ways should be identified to exploit the community resources for reinforcing the learning environment.

In addition to the school, it is essential for the community to organize programs for the students to enhance student's skills and learning. It will reflect the community concern towards the education and development of the students, including respect towards and acceptance of the students. The community can involve students in fund-raising activities, taking care of elderly, vocational activities, cleaning community, and so on. The teachers of Jana Udaya expressed that there has been no such initiation from the community. Nevertheless, a parent shared about a program organized by the community for the first batch of students to attend SLC examination. Likewise, all students mentioned about street drama against smoking and drug abuse organized by the community organizations to tackle such problem, targeting both community members and school students. However, the teachers' retorts signify that the community should be involved more with school and in organizing school activities.

Moreover, it is vital that the community, in which the school is located, has a favorable environment for the students. It should be safe for the students as they pass through the community to get to school from home and vice-versa. The safety comprises of safe infrastructure (building, roads, power supplies) as well as being protected from any risks or problems. What happens before the school day starts and after it ends are just as important and impactful in student's lives as what happens during the traditional school day (Pride Surveys, n.d.). As per a teacher, drug abuse is one of the prevailing problems in the community of Jana Udaya School. The issue of drug abuse is not only limited to community members but has influenced the students as well.

A teacher pointed that the school puts regular efforts in solving problems within the school by providing suggestions and guidance to the students and working together with parents. Likewise, a parent noted that the school mainly takes responsibility to look after the students during school hours and request parents to be concerned and notice the student's activity while at home. The school had organized a program on drugs, in collaboration with the local Police Department which focused on the overall issue of drug abuse and its legal aspects. Nonetheless, these endeavors have not been broad enough to spread up to the community. Besides, neither school nor community initiates to coordinate in solving the problems. The school nevertheless is conducting necessary investigations and a teacher justified that there are only a few cases of drug abuse in school.

From the ecological systems perspective, the case of drug abuse is prominent because of the continual interaction between the student and the environment. Hence, evidence-based intervention with multiple systems (here: school, family, and community) at the different levels (here: micro, mezzo) is paramount. Although the parents are consulted about the issue and they are taking necessary steps at home, even the community should take strong action against the individuals who are involved in drug abuse. When all three partners show an equal level of concern and determination to tackle the issue, the probability of eradicating the issue of drug abuse increases.

Further, all parents expressed that the school has not approached in solving community problems. A student claimed that the reason behind is also because the budget that the school receives is enough only for the school operation. Notwithstanding, the student remarked organizing street drama by the child club against drug abuse. Another student mentioned about school initiating to addressing problems if it is within the school capacity. The respondent gave an example where the students, as well as school staffs, donated some money to help a community member whose both kidneys had failed.

Subsequently, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on the role of community, parents, school, and students in strengthening the home-school-community partnership (Figure 6, p.42). A teacher underlined the absence of local students and thus suggested that if the community members send their child to this school considering it to be a local school, they would have been more concerned about the school. In teacher's part, they should invite the parents regularly and take suggestions from them regarding their teaching, their efforts and so on. Such initiation would make the parents feel that they are valued. The recurrent communication between parents and teachers leads to strengthening the linkage and enhances the concern towards the linkage.

While the teachers focused on reinforcing the partnership, a parent stressed on the progress of students for which the relation between community, parents, and school should be effective. The respondent remarked that when school and community are doing good, the students can progress. However, in the context of this school, neither school nor community is concerned about each other. It is also significant for the parent to be aware of the crucial role they play in establishing and maintaining the liaison leading to enhancement of student performance and learning. Notwithstanding, another parent commented that as the focus of the parents is their child's betterment and to prevent them from delinquency, the parents should give suggestions to the school so that the children can study properly. Also, it is essential for the parents to maintain frequent communication with the school and accumulate information about their child's education and activities.

When analyzing the retorts from the teachers and the parents, I find a gap in the comprehension among teachers and parents that their roles are interlinked and that it is crucial for them to collectively work on reinforcing the linkage for improvement, progress and better student outcomes. When parents and schools work together, it will help make the schools the best it can be and the students better prepared for their futures. School Social Workers are the key link between the school and the home in promoting the involvement of

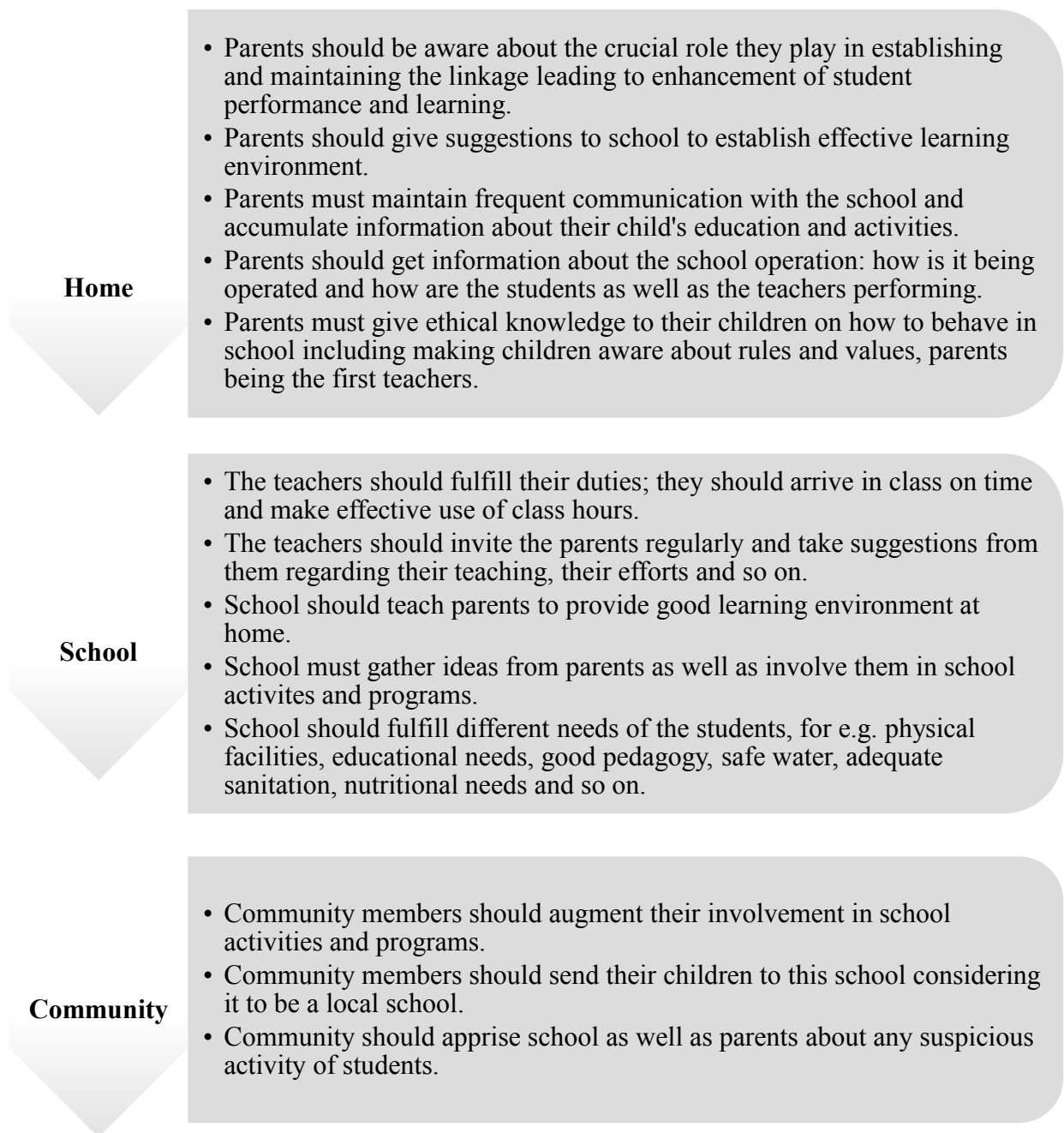
families in their child's education and helping school comprehend and relate to the diversity of family forms, lifestyles, and backgrounds (Allen & Tracy, 2004).

Besides, a student elaborated the role of community, teachers as well as parents. As per the respondents' retort, the parents should support the school financially as well and they should inquire about their child's progress at school. It is also crucial for the parents to get information about the school operation: how is it being operated and how are the students as well as the teachers performing. In the case of any deviance, the parents and teachers should come up with strategies to tackle the issues. Concerning community, they should be updated about happenings in school, also about where students go and what they do. As such, the community should apprise school as well as parents about any suspicious activity of students. In the case of students, they should fulfill their duties. There are times when teachers do not come to school for small reasons or teachers skip classes because the students deny studying and request to have a play time. As per the respondent, it does not simply disturb that single class, but it has a ripple effect and affects concurrent classes. Hence, if such actions are controlled, a positive environment to study is established in the school.

Likewise, another student emphasized the significant role of the parents to give ethical knowledge to their children on how to behave in school and differentiate good from bad, parents being the first teachers. As per the respondent, parents are equally needed for the proper development of the students and with the help from parents, the children can excel in school. Having said that, the respondent also claimed that such relationship does not exist amidst most of the parents and students of this school. The majority of the parents hold religious beliefs and most of the parents are poorly educated and hence they neither encourage the children nor create a favorable learning environment at home. On top of that, parents think that as student's study in school, there is no need for them to study at home. This scenario makes the students completely dependent on school for their academic success. In a study conducted by Auerbach and Collier (2012), parents believed that the most meaningful contribution they made to their child's education was the transmission of mores, beliefs, and values. The authors hence concluded that home-based involvement has a greater impact on academic success than parent's visibility at school.

A student also underscored the necessity for the school to teach parents to provide good learning environment at home. Another student briefed the role of each; parents should be involved in all the school programs; the students should study well and the different needs at school should be fulfilled by the school.





*Figure 6 Role and Responsibilities of Home, School and Community in strengthening the linkage, as provided by the respondents*

### **6.1.2) Implementation and Importance of the Linkage**

Schools should aim to conduct activities focusing on growing intelligence of children and have stronger development. Efforts from school solely are not adequate to achieve these goals. Schools should partner with parents as well as the community, for which, schools must reach out to and create a welcoming environment for their participation while imparting the significance of parental and community engagement. Subsequently, parents

and community should initiate and be actively involved in school activities. Home, school and community, all three partners share equal responsibility in putting efforts to implement and strengthen the liaison.

Jana Udaya school usually invites parents to attend school events and meetings. A teacher told that the parents who reside in or nearby the community attend the programs; regardless, most of them do not come. The school sends an invitation and must persuade many parents to come to school. Even if they come, they come for very short time as they are busy with their work including handling household chores.

One of the many initiations from parents to execute home-school connection is making regular school visits. Parents frequent visit to school indicates their concern as well as their responsibility towards their children. The regular visits reinforce parent's involvement with the teacher, school curriculum, and administration, which makes the parent feel good about the school (LaBahn, 1995). Also, the parent will learn more about the school functions and understand the educational process and educational decisions (ibid). The parents can comprehend the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of a child (Gelfer, 1991), which will motivate parents to develop productive home environment. The involvement of parents also demonstrates the importance of school and education, which will thereby influence the children's attitude towards school throughout their educational journey.

Out of the 5 students, 2 of them shared that their parents visit school only to collect examination report cards; however, they do not come to school otherwise because of their busy schedule. Other 2 students said that their parents used to visit the school often previously, but lately they have been busy. Nonetheless, a student shared that their parents come to school frequently to get updates about their school performance and attend school meetings and activities. Besides, it was also recorded that among parents who visit the school, the number of mothers who make visits is higher in comparison to fathers.

*“Compared to my father, my mother comes to school more. But they do not come frequently because they are busy. Even when my parents get busy to come to school and get my result, my Aunt comes.” (SR 3)*

A teacher mentioned that some of the parents take time out of their busy schedule to visit the school, nonetheless, there are parents who do not come to school at all. Similarly, a teacher argued that majority of parents do not visit the school regularly as they believe that once they send their children to school, they have no more responsibility. Those parents completely rely on school for their child's education. It is a common trend in Nepal for the parents to bestow the responsibility of their children solely upon the school. Although at present, the number of parents prioritizing the collaboration with the school is increasing, there still exists parents who are unmindful about the significance of such alliance.

Furthermore, two of the teachers commented that the parents of primary students visit the school often but not that of secondary students. As students grow older, the level of parental involvement declines, hence it is less in secondary schools than in elementary (Stouffer, 1992). A teacher explained that when the parents visit the school regularly, the teacher might

deal with the students' differently. For instance, the teachers would deal differently with the students when they make blunders, thinking that the parents understand how the situation is to be dealt with. It is comfortable and easy for the teachers to connect with the parents in case their children create troubles or make progress.

A teacher affirmed that in the case of children who are domestic laborers and live with their guardians, most of the guardians do not visit the school as they lack interest to know the progress of the children. The teacher also stated that guardians send the children to school only because they can keep the child at their home to work only if they admit the child to school.

Nonetheless, as per the teacher, there are supportive guardians as well who are concerned about the child's studies and such students are progressing as well. On the other hand, some of the good students are becoming worse because of the environment at home they work. Before working, the children were good academically, but later their performance decreased following the work. It is due to the work load, torture, and shortage of time. This demonstrates the influence of home environment on the performance and achievement of the students.

Many studies indicated diverse factors which are responsible for the scholastic failure of students, such as: low socioeconomic background, student's cognitive abilities, school related factors, environment of home, or the support given by the parents and other family members (Khan & Malik, 1999; Fan, 2001; Gonzalez-pianda, et al., 2002). When the children receive favorable environment at home as well as support from family, it enhances the development of their cognitive ability, school readiness, academic achievement and emotional adjustment (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000). However, the disturbing environment at home impinges the ability of the students to focus and concentrate. Hence, it is substantial for the parents to apprehend the importance of establishing productive home environment.

Two of the parents asserted that they visit the school regularly to attend school programs, meetings as well as to get updates about their child's progress. A parent shared that sometimes they are invited to school meetings to discuss their child's education and are asked for suggestions on school matters. However, the other parent mentioned that the school invites only a few parents and even if all parents are invited, they do not play a crucial role as the associations (SMC and PTA) handle everything.

In Nepal, it is obligatory for the schools to form School Management Committee for establishing, maintaining and reinforcing linkage between community and schools. A teacher of Jana Udaya School commented that without SMC and PTA, the school will not operate. SMC in this School, specifically, have been supportive in conducting daily school activities, building infrastructures, networking with organizations, and gathering financial sources. Another teacher added that the monetary means assembled by SMC has also been helpful for the school in charging fewer fees from the students. Also, SMC holds meetings regularly as every decision needs to be approved from SMC before implementation.

A teacher remarked that - to support SMC, the school has PTA which holds the objective to establish a good school environment and ensure parental involvement. If a student remains absent, the PTA finds out the reason behind and tries to solve the problem. PTA provide suggestions and visit schools, and they have meetings every three or six months. However, SMC has more responsibilities than PTA and due to the limited role of PTA, it has not been as active as SMC.

Another teacher claimed that the PTA has not been functioning as per the manual and the members make excuses for having limited time. Similarly, another teacher commented that no beneficial decisions have been made through PTA- PTA has not been as progressive as it should have been. It is also because PTA requires the participation from parents and as most of the parents are daily wage earners, it is not possible for them to devote time to establishing a good relationship with the school. Further, the school cannot provide them with incentives because of the limited budget.

By contrast, a parent acknowledged the role of PTA in this school. Punctuality of the teachers, their presence in class throughout the class hours and covering the lesson plans used to be a question in past. But, PTA has helped improve the scenario by frequently monitoring the teachers. Likewise, another parent agreed that the rules in the school are strict at present. In past, the students would leave school premises in the middle of school hours and not return to attend classes. Because of the endeavor from PTA, such incidents have minimized these days as students are no longer allowed to leave school during school hours which is constantly monitored by the teachers as well as parents.

When parents participate in management committees of school, it provides them a mechanism to assert their preferences over the schools' operational decisions and policies, and make schools more accountable (Gertler, Patrinos, & Rubio-Codina, 2008). These forms of participation allow the parents to directly monitor principal's and teacher's effort as well as overall school performance and provide a feedback mechanism for them to raise any concerns (ibid).

In the case of students, a student commented that, when a student faces problem at school, SMC members bring the issue to focus and put efforts to tackle it. Another student pointed out that, as per the suggestions from parents (PTA), the teachers are not allowed to sit in the classroom while they are teaching; they should stand and teach. Additionally, they are not allowed to check assignments during class hours, it should be done during the teacher's free time.

However, two of the students opposed the contribution of SMC and PTA in this school. As per the students, they are not aware of any support from SMC and PTA, which reflects that not all students are familiar with its notion. I believe that not only teachers, parents and community but even the students should be informed about SMC and PTA, its roles and its significance. The functioning of SMC and PTA is linked with child welfare, their performance and development and school effectiveness which requires establishing productive relationships with the students. As every action of SMC and PTA is directed

towards the benefit of the students, cooperating and collaborating with students elevates the effectiveness.

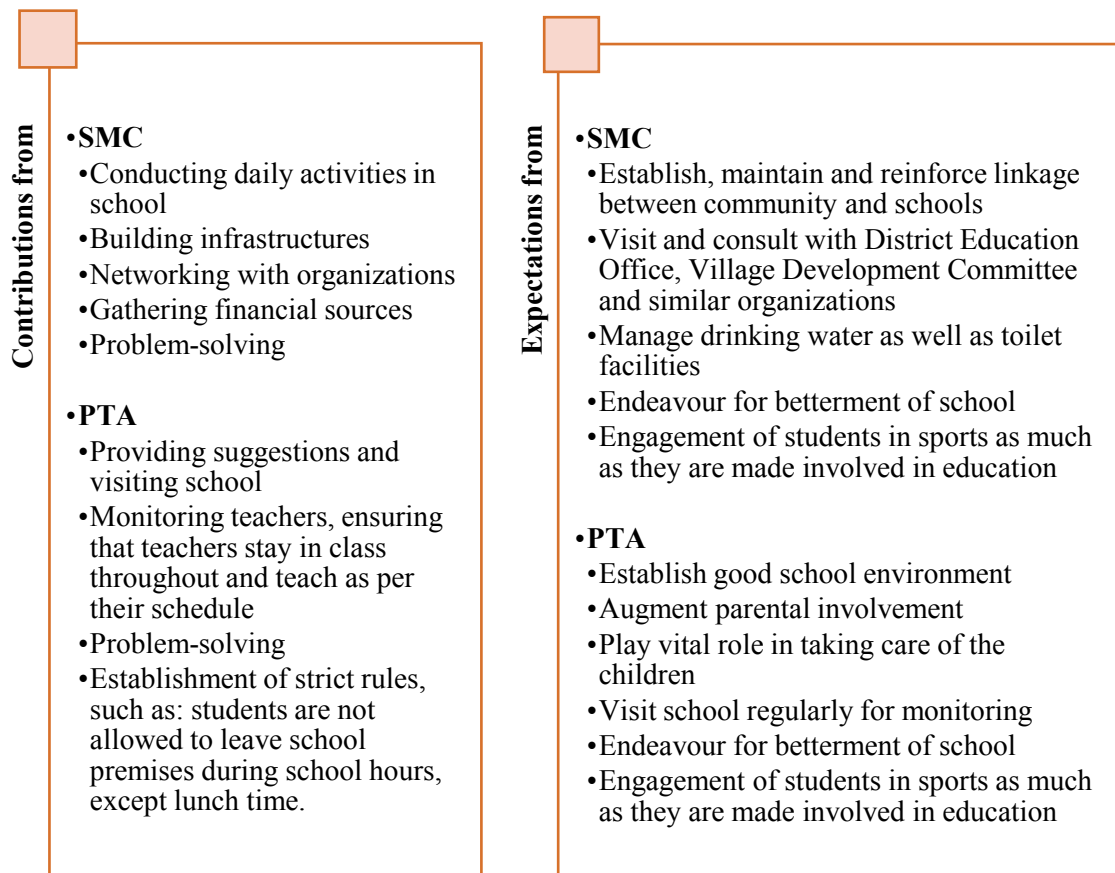
The retorts from the teachers manifest the lack of appreciation towards the contribution of PTA. While parents and most of the students mentioned that PTA has been instrumental, teachers denied it. It is crucial for the school to value PTA, its members and their contribution to encourage PTA for their active participation. When there is strong support from the Principal and when teachers build effective partnerships with parents to fortify their participation in the school, parental involvement becomes a reality; which is associated with enhanced child performance and school effectiveness.

Besides, a teacher, a parent, and three students mentioned that the board members of PTA and SMC are diversified, in terms of race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. By contrast, another teacher disagreed and responded that although the PTA members for this year has not been confirmed, previously the association did not cover members from all the socioeconomic characteristics present in this school. The teacher, nevertheless, claimed about PTA having the majority of female members, as mothers usually show up at the school more often than fathers. Likewise, a student stated that the members are selected based on their capability hence all socioeconomic criteria are not necessarily included.

SMC and PTA are crucial components of every school. Besides school operation, these organizations act as a catalyst in establishing good relations with the community, parents and within the school members. A teacher stressed on the role of the SMC and PTA in forming and strengthening the linkage while the teacher's role in teaching, creating favorable school environment and organizing other school activities. Also, the respondent specified that the teachers lack time to visit and consult with the District Education Office, Village Development Committee, and similar organizations. Hence, SMC and PTA are there to fill these gaps.

Besides, a parent stated that teachers should not be solely responsible for the students, PTA should play a vital role and should take care of the students. Likewise, a student underlined that the major responsibility of SMC and PTA is to putting efforts for the betterment of the school. The role of SMC and PTA in engaging students in sports as much as they focus on education was emphasized by another student. According to a student, SMC of the school should manage drinking water as well as toilet facilities. Further, parents should visit the school regularly for monitoring.

Based on the responses, SMC has been instrumental in overall school management whereas PTA has specifically played role in improvising the teaching-learning environment and maintaining the quality of discipline in school. However, the crucial role of SMC and PTA in establishing, maintaining and fortifying the home-school-community liaison remains unfulfilled.



*Figure 7 The contributions and expectations from SMC and PTA as per the respondents*

Moreover, concerning school decision making, I feel that the parents, students and community members should equally be part of decision making as the school administration. An inclusive approach to school decision-making and parental involvement creates a shared responsibility among parents, community members, teachers and school leaders (Emerson, Fear, Fox, & Sanders, 2012). When students are given role in developing rules and policies, they set their own climate of respect and responsibility (stopbullying.gov, n.d.).

According to a teacher, in this school, SMC play chief role in decision making and only the board members of PTA are involved in decision-making. A parent agreed and shared that only PTA board members are informed about major decisions, not all parents are informed. The parent also expressed the involvement of all parents in every school matter is trivial; regardless, their involvement in school and their child's education is substantial. Likewise, a student responded that decisions are made in presence of all teachers, SMC, PTA as well as president and secretary of child club. However, it is also vital for the parents to be a partner in decision-making, as the decision made by school affects every student and their family.

Nevertheless, a parent doubted their own potential in holding a remarkable position and providing effective suggestions.

*“... but even if we are invited for meetings, what do we suggest? Even if they invite me, what suggestion will I give? I am not literate. We do not understand anything.” (PR 3)*

The statement indicates that the parent lacks self-esteem and confidence. The parent considers lacking knowledge and feels that their contribution towards their children as well as school is unimportant and unappreciated. Such cases are significantly accurate when the parent may not have a great deal of education (Dixon, 1992; Vandergrift & Greene, 1992). The efforts from a parent to make a difference may be limited, but when the parents come and work together, their power grows. As a result, parents can accomplish great things for their children and schools.

A teacher expressed support to the eligibility criteria for parents to become members of SMC according to which even those whose children do not study in the school are eligible to apply. The teacher stated that majority of the parents whose children study in the school are illiterate. Hence, the teacher was ambivalent about parent's contribution and their capability to coordinate with the municipality and other organizations, in case those parents become the member of SMC.

Because of limited educational backgrounds of the parents, teachers hold the misperception that they cannot help their children. But, there are many poorly educated families who support learning by talking with their children about school, monitoring homework, and disseminating the importance of education and sharing that they expect their children to perform well in school. Such misperception among the teachers disables them to provide opportunities for parents to get involved. (Caplan, 1995)

In consistent with the literature, despite the educational background or social position of the parents, parental involvement is an essential component of successful education and teaching at school level. Supporting the parental involvement in schools, Massey (1993) (as cited by (Tatlah & Iqbal, 2011) states:

*“It is a mistake to underestimate the willingness and capacity of many parents to work with the school ...”.*

When the parental involvement is hindered by many factors such as their educational and socioeconomic status, empowerment of parents is a constructive solution. The schools can help parents in gaining the skills and confidence they require to guide and motivate their children as well as to augment their involvement in school. When children receive support from their parents, they feel empowered and secure which augments their capacity to perform well in school as well as in relationships. Giving parents the information and support they need and helping to enhance the parent-child relationship is an important part of the process.

Organizing workshops is one of the ways to empowering the parents. The workshops can be conducted with the aim to disseminating necessary information related to child development and their academic, nonacademic performance including the importance of parental involvement in school and measures to achieve it. It is essential for the parents to know what to expect of their child academically as they upgrade from one grade to next, and how to

deal with problems they experience in this academical journey (Nelson, 2016). The parents should also have information about addressing age-appropriate aspects of children's social and emotional development (ibid).

According to a teacher, the school has not initiated in organizing such workshops. Nevertheless, the teacher mentioned that such workshops should have been organized to explain the roles and responsibilities of parents because the parents may not understand the reason and significance for their involvement and concern in their child's education. Generally, the parents of this school are unaware of the impact of education on their child. Most of the parents suppose that their children will end up in the same place as their parents. Hence, the teacher emphasized the significance of keeping parents informed about the development and changes that education can bring upon in their child and the future it possesses.

Other teachers mentioned about the workshops organized for parents in the school by other organizations such as CWISH. Workshops on child rights, child abuse and workshops related to health issues are organized such as on nutrition. However, the workshops focusing on the parental involvement precisely has not been conducted. In contrast, a parent pointed that they have been given training on providing practical knowledge to students.

A student told that such workshops focusing on parental involvement have been beneficial as the number of parents frequently visiting school has surged. Another student retorted about workshops organized by school focusing on giving advice to all the parents. Notwithstanding, a student admitted that no workshops are organized for parents to ensure their effective involvement in the education of their children. The other student agreed to the former student's reply but said that despite the absence of such workshops, parents establish a proper learning environment for the students at home.

As the outcomes of the parental and community involvement have not been much beneficial to the children and neither to school, parents, and community, Jana Udaya School needs to strengthen its endeavor. A School Social Worker will be helpful to fill in the gap through providing the leadership that will create welcoming school environments where the home-school-community relationship will flourish. The role of School Social Worker is needed in dealing with the challenges as schools, families, and communities collaborate to meet the educational, social, psychological, and developmental needs of the students.

## **6.2) Information Distribution and Maintaining Communication**

Communication plays a significant role in establishing and reinforcing the home-school-community linkage. It is essential for all three partners to correspond timely and exchange ideas. With maintaining frequent communication, the partners will be mindful of one's unique roles and shared responsibilities leading to improved parental and community involvement, student's development and educational outcome and enhanced school effectiveness. Due to the strong communication, the students will feel more responsible towards oneself and towards the school, family, and community.

Schools should employ reliable tool to correspond with parents and community members. In Jana Udaya School, the parents are usually communicated through letters or notices, and



sometimes through phone calls. The letters regarding any events or decisions or announcements are given to the students to hand over to their respective parents or guardians. From this year, the school has started publishing and distributing annual school calendar with all the school events and important dates to help both students and parents stay up-to-date with the school activities. In the case of additional programs, the parents are informed through letters or notices. Despite such efforts, a teacher thinks that the parents do not keep themselves informed about all the events. Nevertheless, parents confessed being up-to-date about school occurrences through regular visits, letters sent by the school and information shared by the children.

As an alternative, the teacher reckons sending monthly letters to the parents informing them about the events held in the previous month and the programs to be conducted in following month. The letter will also include the name of the participants of the events so that the parents will be aware if their children have participated or not. This will influence parents to show concerns towards their child's non-participation and motivate their child to take part in events. From my perspective, such monthly letter is an effective endeavor which will reflect the school's encouragement as well as expectation from the parents for their participation in school activities and concern towards their children.

The reports signify the existence of one-way communication: from school to the family. Under such circumstances, it is vital for the school to strive to establish two-way communication and make it as productive as possible. Two-way communications can be made through phone calls and conferences which do not limit to providing information but also includes discussion between teachers and parents about the child's performance and progress.

In the parent's part, some of them visit school frequently to communicate with the teachers and gather information about school activities and their child's performance. When the parent-teacher communication is profound, the students are more concerned and aware of their actions both in school and at home. It also helps in the formulation of effective parent-teacher relationship. The parents mentioned that their healthy relationship with teachers inspires the students to achieve more.

Similarly, a student underscored the motivation to study depending upon the nature of the relation between parents and teachers. If the link is good, the students will be good as well; however, if the relationship is bad, the students will hold negative perspective towards parents and teachers and neglect their studies. Further, there are a higher number of parents who are busy to make school visits including the parents and guardians who lack interest towards the child's education hindering the effectiveness of home-school communication.

In addition to the communication tool, the school should also make a proper decision about the type of information to be disseminated (Figure 8, p. 51). According to a teacher, the parents should be informed about students' daily attendance because some students leave their home to come to school but they end up going somewhere else. Also, the information regarding student's participation in class, their general school performance, relationship with teachers and friends should be disseminated. As Jana Udaya is a government school, a

teacher said that the parents are invited when presenting the audit of the school, hence parents are aware of the school budget and its expenses.

Other teacher mentioned that parents should be known about every school activity because only when school shares all information, it can expect involvement of parents. Through information sharing, the school can also receive suggestions from parents. The teacher added that the school can spread the message in case any support is required for which there might be parents who are skilled, for instance: for gardening or minor carpentry work. However, the teacher commented that the school has not been disseminating such information.

A student stressed that the problem that the student faces at school should also be communicated with the family. Another student underlined the importance for the school to let the parents know about their role in their child's education. Likewise, a student told that the parents should be invited to sports events as well as during prize distribution of such events which will demonstrate the capacity and achievement of their child.

Besides, a teacher commented that the school is a public institution and no programs are organized privately. Hence, the community members are welcome to visit anytime and gather information about school activities. As per the teacher, it is also vital for the community to have an interest in building a connection with the school. Another teacher held common opinion who told that the community does not consider school as a community resource and community wealth. From school social work perspective, for the community to maintain communication with school and understand its worth for the community, initiation from school to establish a healthy school- community relationship is vital.

Information to be shared with parents by School	Role of parents in their child's education
	Student's daily attendance and class participation
	Student's problems
	Relation between teachers and students
	School budget and expenses
	Past and upcoming school events and child's participation
	Support from parents in school activities

*Figure 8 Information to be shared with parents by School as per the respondents*

Besides within the linkage, it is crucial for the three partners to maintain proper communication with the students. The students should feel free to share their feelings, emotions and any problems with either all three partners or any one among the three partners. It is the responsibility of the home-school-community as well as the students to establish the favorable milieu which encourages the students to manifest their feelings.

With the aim to analyze the level of communication between the parents and the child, I inquired if the students shared their school experiences with their parents. All the parents expressed their children sharing about the school activities on their own. Regarding students,

three of the students agreed that they share their experiences at school with their parents. Two of the students told that their parents timely ask about the school happenings.

The communication between parent and child helps build up trust and respect among one another and helps children to establish individual values and make healthy decisions about themselves (Advocates for youth, 2010). When the parents communicate properly with the children, it exhibits the interest of parents towards their child's life and the significance of child in parent's life. A study conducted by Amodeo and Martin (1982) found that when effective communication is not maintained, it will affect the general well-being of the children in later life, significantly in the contributions they make in the society. (as cited by Offordile, 2012)

However, the views gathered from teachers were distinct. A teacher considers that the students of this school do not share their school experiences with their parents; either because they do not have good experiences to share or they are not interested in sharing. The respondent added that some students presumably communicate about the school events, their participation in the events as well as their achievements related to the event. Another teacher held similar views and mentioned that the primary level students who stay with their parents share their school experiences nevertheless, the secondary level students do not.

Additionally, the teacher argued that the situation also depends on the parents and expressed that in their case, they inquire with their daughter regularly about her day at school and other activities. Hence, perhaps in the case of students at this school, the parents do not ask their child about school. And concerning children, it is their nature to conceal information leading to a lack of interaction between parents and children, the teacher added. When such situation persists, the parents should inspire the children to express; for e.g.: by asking questions.

In addition to parent-child communication, a proper communication between teacher and student is essential as well. The effective communication that the teacher maintains with the student directs the shape of student's life, has a positive effect on the attitude shown toward themselves or the public in general and influences the development of the ability to communicate, research and be creative (Ataunal, 2003) (as cited by Ulug, Ozden, & Eryilmaz, 2011). Furthermore, interacting with the students and manifesting positive behavior such as: asking questions, understanding their thoughts, showing interest and appreciation amplifies the student's motivation and success (ibid).

As per the respondents, the communication between the teachers and students in this school is proper. Both are comfortable sharing their opinions, thoughts, feelings, and problems with one another. However, the level of communication with the strict teacher is less in comparison with the lenient teachers. Teachers conveyed that they interact with the students even outside the class hours. Some students also expressed feeling encouraged because of proper relationship with the teachers.

A parent told that the communication between family and school has led to trust and understanding. A student mentioned that due to the healthy communication between school and parents, parents have faith that their child will gain a proper education at school. Also,

a school expressed feeling safe because of the positive relationship they have with other students and teachers.

### **6.3) Problems and Obstacles for this Linkage**

Joseph-Goldfarb (2014), in her research, mentioned about four paramount types of barriers which thwart involvement of parents: logistical, cultural, institutional and systemic. In reference to the barriers, I will compare the problems and obstacles found in the context of Jana Udaya School, which covers more of logistical, institutional and systemic barriers. Logistical barriers relate to practical concerns, like transportation, the schedule of school activities, child-care obligations, financial issues, work schedules, the proximity to school to home, inability to pay admission fees for school programs and conflicts with the schedules of siblings or other family members, which interfere with parent participation. However simple, logistical barriers have a huge impact on parents' ability as well as willingness to engage in their children's schooling (Randolph, et al., 2006). (Joseph-Goldfarb, 2014)

Jana Udaya School has the majority of low-income families and most of the parents are daily-wage earners which averts them from devoting time in their child's schooling. In this school, consistent with the report by OECD (2012), lower levels of parental engagement are chiefly influenced by pressures derived from economic and social difficulties, lack of flexible work hours, extremely long work hours and single parenting, reflecting the logistical barriers. Further, as most of the students are laborers, they live with their guardians and not with parents. The parents of these students reside in different parts of the country making it complex to maintain communication between the parents and the school. It is, therefore, a challenge for the school to develop sustained and effective connection with the parents.

However, the school considers the schedules of the parents in conducting school events, meetings, and other programs. Despite the effort, a teacher expressed that the parents do not attend schools' activities or events which bring up the institutional barriers. As students spend more time with the parents, the teacher stated that the parents should be more responsible and concerned about establishing bright future of the children.

Institutional barriers appear when the parents and schools have a varying expectation for their respective roles (Joseph-Goldfarb, 2014). In Jana Udaya school, in one hand, some teachers comprehend that parents are more responsible towards the students and on the other hand, some parents put the responsibility of the student solely upon the teacher. The apprehension that parents and teachers are equally responsible towards the child, is crucial. The school comprises of children from different backgrounds who bring upon their family and community beliefs, practices, knowledge, expectations and behaviors to the school (UNICEF, 2009). Likewise, in return, they learn new forms of knowledge, practices, attitudes, and skills from school which they introduce within their homes as well as communities (ibid). Thereby, children are the bridge connecting the world of school and that of home and community. Both worlds teach numerous knowledge and skills to children, and they hold diverse roles and duties towards the children. Comprehending this, a School Social Worker endeavors to establish a connection and develop collaboration between home and school in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of the children.

Additionally, some parents feel unknown of their role in school as well as their child's education or are unaware of its relevance. Hence, it is substantial for the schools to understand that lack of parental participation does not necessarily indicate they are neglecting their responsibilities, they simply may not have the time, resources, or know-how to help (Wanat, 1992). Consistent with the extant literature, a student commented that majority of parents are unmindful of the ways to get involved in their child's education, underlining the apprehension among the parents about the importance of being part of the school activities. Because of such scenario, the school must put more efforts in disseminating required information about parental engagement. Also, the parents should visit schools and gather information.

Educationists have given utmost importance to the strong nexus between school and the parents or families for the optimum development of children. Parental preoccupation with their jobs, loneliness, none to care and share and similar factors lead to an enhanced sense of anxiety, stress, and insecurities among the children. The situation also disables parents from committing time to school. The gaps between the school system and the family halt the benefits of education. School Social Workers are the connecting link (Robinson, 1978) and hence in such situation, School Social Workers can fill the gap between parent-child including parent-school communication and interactions. (Mann, 2015)

Similarly, most of the guardians are not concerned about the student's educational status. The guardians assume that the attainment of the child is not beneficial to them hence they deny allotting time for the child's education. Such scenario leads to complication in forming a home-school liaison. It is possible that the parent does not have a great deal of interest in the school or the child's education; they may not feel that education is significant (Vandelgrift & Greene, 1992). Under such circumstances, schools must compensate for the parents' lack of investment in their children by supposing authority over formal education (Blitz, Kida, Gresham, & Bronstein, 2013; Olivos & Mendoza, 2010; Valencia, 2009).

Barriers are prolonged when schools assume a "deficit model" of parent involvement which devalues parents' values and concerns (Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005). From this perspective, parent involvement honors school's interests over that of parents, placing the school in the position of power and authority. For instance, in the context of Jana Udaya School: although the school invites parents to meetings, the interviews denote that such meetings circumscribe what parents can do, for instance despite the suggestions given by the parents, it remains confined to documentation. Besides, respondents, specifically parents, suggested that most of the school PTA meetings and programs are targeted to certain parents – precisely the board members of PTA, excluding the parents who feel disconnected. Doucet (2011) urges schools to examine, and then broaden practices to establish unity amid schools and families, and to resist practices that create divisiveness and exclusion.

The final type of hindrance to parent involvement is systemic barriers which are caused by mezzo and macro-level actions influencing the school functioning (Joseph-Goldfarb, 2014). At the mezzo level, the school policy and culture have direct impact on the practices related to parent involvement (ibid). At the macro level, the government legislation as well as local school boards legislation delineates the extent to which parents can be involved in decision-

making (ibid). To paraphrase a teacher's response, although the government has ordered all the schools to formulate SMC, proper guidance and instruction are deficient. As a result, the proper selection of members and effective functioning is hampered, it is significantly because of the political influence upon the school which has directed the focus towards politics rather than benefits for the school. This result is consistent with the conclusion reached by Khanal (2013). Another teacher noted that the PTA of this school is not performing as per the manual lowering its activities and impact. Besides, the role of decision-making lies heavily on the part of school administration.

One of the major hindrances for Jana Udaya School in establishing linkage with the community is the minimal local students admitted to the school. A teacher opined that the school should approach the community first which will encourage the community to establish a network with the school. The school should strategize and convince them to send their children to this school, as a result, the community will be concerned for the betterment of the school. Similarly, a teacher advised for the school to increase interaction with the community, for which the school administration should play major role as teachers are busy in teaching and related affairs.

A teacher remarked that due to the absence of connection with the community, the school is not under direct supervision of the community. When problems arise in school, efforts are made solely by the school and hence there is a lack of multilevel intervention. Also, the teacher mentioned that the community has many alternative schools to admit their children, however for the school, it is the only community they have. Hence, it is vital for the school to reach out to the community in having direct and symbiotic relationship with them.

Another teacher suggested that the school should transparently share its plans, activities, to expect support from the community. Although at present the school receives support from the community, more efforts should be put in augmenting the connection as well as the level of support. On the other hand, a student pointed that the community should give equal priority to this government school as to any other private schools. Such impression and support will help the school progress.

Besides, due to the established linkage, the three partners should feel comfortable in sharing their concerns, needs, and problems with one another. In Jana Udaya School, according to all respondents, parents, as well as schools, are comfortable in expressing their concerns, needs, and problems to each other. In relation to this, a parent shared that the principal frequently asks the parents about the problems the students have which provides a platform for the parents to vent the issues they are facing. Likewise, another parent replied:

*“There are times when we cannot financially support my sister's education. At these times, I come to school and ask the school to arrange for financial support for a certain time. Sometimes we are not able to pay exam fee on time, during those times we ask for support and the school does support us.” (PR 2)*

<b>Problems and Obstacles in forming linkage with:</b>	
<b>Home</b>	<b>Logistic barriers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-income families</li> <li>• Most of the parents' lack time to visit school or monitor child's education</li> <li>• Some of the parents live further from school and in far-away districts</li> </ul>
	<b>Institutional barriers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some teachers comprehend that parents are more responsible towards the students</li> <li>• Most of the parents put the responsibility of the student solely upon the teacher</li> <li>• Some of the parents and guardians do not have a great deal of interest in the school or their child's education; the importance of education is ignored</li> <li>• Parents are unknown of their role in school as well as their child's education or are unaware of its relevance</li> <li>• Suggestions from parents are not addressed by school; parents feel unimportant and unappreciated</li> <li>• School meetings and programs are targeted for certain parents</li> </ul>
	<b>Systemic Barriers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of proper guidance and instruction from government in formulating SMC</li> <li>• Political influence in school</li> <li>• PTA not operating as per the manual</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of local students in the school</li> <li>• Community members lack concern towards students, the school and their involvement in school activities</li> <li>• Initiation from school to build and strengthen relationships with community is missing</li> </ul>

*Figure 9 Major challenges in establishing home school community linkage in Jana Udaya School*

## **7) Ethical Guidelines and Educational Policy**

### **7.1) School Safety**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child underlines the significance of protection of children's quality of life as well as their rights to be educated in a safe environment, free from violence of all forms, victimization, harassment, and neglect (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). One of the vital functions of School Social Worker is ensuring the school offers safe and supportive school environment and that the students feel safe at school. When students do not feel safe, it impinges them academically by causing stress or triggering depressive symptoms, hindering concentration in class, and likely adopt behavior disruptive to other students (Lacoe, 2013). In the utmost level, feeling unsafe may avert students from attending school at all.

The big earthquake that hit Nepal 2 years back in 2015, followed by aftershocks, raised many insecurities among the people, including the safety of their children at school, as children spend a large portion of their time in schools. According to UN OCHA Asia and the Pacific (2015), over 16,000 public and private schools, which accounts for half of the country's total, was damaged (Watt, 2015). In addition, the devastating earthquakes destroyed or severely damaged over 35,000 classrooms (UNICEF, 2016). Ensuring that the children can study in safe transitional or permanent classrooms as soon as possible was and has been one of the substantial priorities.

Jana Udaya Secondary School was marked safe by the Nepal Government after inspection (Figure 10). The school administration claims that the school building was constructed with earthquake-resistant retro fitting technology in 2007. When the respondents were asked to define safe school environment, all the respondents affirmed that school building is safe. One of the teachers mentioned:

*“When the students and the parents learned that the school building is earthquake-resistant and even observed the safety of the school building after the devastating earthquake, their morale did not drop. Also, the programs from NSET has been of great help and support to the students as well as a teacher.” (T1)*



Figure 10 Jana Udaya Secondary School marked 'Safe' following devastating earthquake in 2015, by the Nepal Government after inspection

Concerning the same matter, a student commented:

*“Last year, when the earthquake occurred, it did not destroy the school building to a larger extent as the buildings are earthquake resistant. So, we are more confident to stay in this building.” (SR 5)*

The school also has a display of 'Earthquake evacuation plan' (Figure 11), which was developed during the 'School Earthquake Security Program' organized by Government of Nepal, UNICEF and NSET. Overall, the plan depicts the school infrastructure design; it illustrates an evacuation route from the classes and other rooms in the school to assemble in the school ground which is an open space. The plan also indicates the space from where first-aid treatment is provided.

According to Child-Friendly School Manual (2009) published by UNICEF, basically, schools must recognize and eradicate the causes of injury in school buildings as well as school grounds. Also, schools should ensure that emergency response equipment is properly maintained and readily available, establish emergency procedures and practice emergency response. The safe school building has helped students including staffs of Jana Udaya School in feeling safe and staying calm. Additionally, the earthquake evacuation plan and the earthquake related programs have made children as well as school staffs aware about the necessary steps to undertake during, while and after such disaster. Also, the first-aid box is available and the parents feel secure about sending their children to school.





Figure 11 Jana Uday Secondary School's 'Earthquake Evacuation Plan'

Besides the safety of school building, the students highlighted the safety they feel in relation to teachers as well as friends. The students noted the healthy relationship they have with both teachers and friends, makes them feel safe in the school. One of the students remarked:

*“Teachers do not threaten us, they are like our friends. We can share the things we are not satisfied with and they give suggestions.” (SR 1)*

A safe and clean school facility, caring teachers and caring, respectful relationships with peers are the salient features of a safe school climate (California Department of Education, n.d.). The positive bond between teachers and students creates closeness, warmth, and positivity which enables students to engage in academically and socially productive ways in classroom and school (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). This also comprises of relationships with peers and developing self-esteem and self-concept (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Additionally, Murray & Malmgren (2005) noted that the students in low-income schools can particularly benefit from positive relationships with teachers.

From the viewpoint of school social work, the positive relation within students and between students and teachers is crucial and valuable. In one hand, the students feel secure, relaxed and positive and it influences their confidence, behavior, self-esteem and academic performance. On the other hand, the teacher gets to learn more about the student, receives cooperation from the students, can influence students to increase their engagement and is able to create a classroom environment which is more conducive to learning and meeting student's developmental, emotional and academic needs.

Besides, a student also shared one of the reasons she feels safe in the school as a girl:

*“In this school, the priority is given more to female than to male. When girls are going through menstruation, there is a room for them to take rest.” (SR 3)*

Likewise, a teacher mentioned that when the female students are menstruating and need a sanitary napkin, they can contact a female teacher who is specifically assigned to this matter. In addition, the facility of separate latrines for girls and boys with water supply and dustbins in Jana Udaya School has helped in maintaining a good number of female students in the school. Notwithstanding, the cleanliness of latrines is not maintained.

Menstruation has been one of the prominent reasons for the female students to drop-out of school in Nepal. A study conducted by Mahon & Fernandes, 2010 noted that over 50% of the respondents (204 in total) in Nepal reported not going to school at some time, due to menstruation. The provision of toilets and menstrual supplies has emerged as a propitious strategy to support adolescent girls' school attendance as well as performance in less developed countries (Grant, Lloyd, & Mensch, 2013).

Menstrual hygiene is an area of concern for school social work and the School Social Workers should be involved in menstrual hygiene to protect the health of girls as well as to enable them to stay in school. It further mentions that the School Social Workers should be involved in educating girls about menstruation, promoting installation and maintenance of toilets at schools, providing clean water and facilities for hand-washing and providing menstrual hygiene products. (Huxtable, 2016)

Besides, the existence of drug abuse among the students was noted by the majority of the respondents as one of the components hindering the school safety. A teacher claimed school being affected by the external environment; the widespread drug addiction among the youths of the community has highly influenced the students. Likewise, another teacher shared about receiving complaints regarding student's carrying drugs. In response, the school monitors the students during school hours and even out of the school hours, the students are monitored by local teachers as much as possible. Also, a parent agreed about seeing students abusing drugs and their parents being informed about the incidents. School and parents together plan to help the student get rid of drugs, as a result, the number of such cases has decreased at present.

A student expressed being encouraged by the teachers to not do drugs:

*“Yes, school is safe. The school building is earthquake resistant. Also, the teachers encourage us not to get involved in drug abuse.” (SR 4)*

From my perspective, the reason behind students of Jana Udaya School engaging in drug abuse is also because of their low socioeconomic background including their mental health issues such as depression, stress. Children raised in low socioeconomic status families (specifically working poor who work long hours for little pay) experience less supervision and care, which increases the vulnerability to drug-abuse (Spooner & Hetherington, 2004). Additionally, according to Degenhardt, Hall, and Lynskey (2001), mental health disorders can cause drug disorders when people suffering from mental health problems use drugs to

alleviate the symptoms of their mental health problem and because of over-use, problematic use is developed.

As diverse factors contribute to drug use, emphasis on changing individual behaviors for drug prevention and treatment will have limited impact. Considering from school social work perspective, the focus should also be given to bringing changes in the social determinants of drug use which comprises of the social, cultural, economic, and physical environment.

## **7.2) Bullying**

“A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions<sup>3</sup> on the part of one or more other students. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another”. The student who is the victim of such negative actions has difficulty in defending oneself and is somewhat helpless against the student/s who harass. (Olweus, 1994)

When I inquired the respondents about bullying, five of the respondents (two students, two teachers, and a parent) affirmed that bullying exists in the school, four of other students and teachers stated that the acts are rather teasing than bullying whereas parents shared mixed views on bullying and teasing. I find it important to educate the school staffs, students including parents about bullying and teasing and the demarcation between the two.

Firstly, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on the statement ‘Bullying is sometimes fun to do’. One of the students said that bullying is a negative act. A teacher stated that no one deserves to be bullied and bullying is wrong. Likewise, another student and a teacher mentioned bullying might be entertaining for the bully but the victim will have a problem and feel insulted. Also, the victim might be going through difficult circumstances and getting bullied might further discourage him/her. Two students commented that bully will later regret their heinous act and there is a probability for the bullies to get bullied at some point. Meanwhile, they will realize and understand that one cannot withstand bullying.

Subsequently, the respondents were asked if they had seen others being bullied in the school. A teacher said that they have not come across such situation on a personal level and claimed that even though bullying exists, it is not a problem in this school. And, if the cases of bullying are known by teachers, the situation is investigated. Another teacher stated the presence of bullying in the school and mentioned that the act of bullying depends on one’s nature; when an individual is powerful, they say something out of a joke and the other person might get hurt. Nonetheless, the respondent said that the level of bullying has decreased.

Bullies do not belong to a homogenous group (Shetgiri, 2013). Although some of the bullies have the proper social skill, they use bullying to acquire or maintain dominance in their peer group (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005; Barker, Arseneault, Brendgen, Fontaine, & Maughan, 2008). Bullies have a positive attitude towards violence and lack of empathy for their victims (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). According to Pepler et al (2008), around 10% of bully’s

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<sup>3</sup> Negative action is referred to as action carried out by physical contact, by words, or in other ways: such as making faces or dirty gestures, and intentional exclusion from a group. (Olweus, 1994)

manifest consistently high rates of bullying over time. Moreover, it is highly likely for the bullies to evince defiant behavior and negative attitudes towards school and to use drugs (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003).

However, literature refer that bullies do not deliberately or intentionally engage in the hurtful behavior. The negative aspects of the bullies' life also encourage them for such actions. As per Smokowski & Kopasz (2005), bullies may suffer from attention-deficit disorder, depression and opposition-conduct disorder. Also, common reasons that a child is a bully is due to the lack of attention from a parent at home, encountering bullying at home and having difficulty to socialize (STOMP Out Bullying, n.d.).

According to a report by Shetgiri (2013), most bullying victims are passive or submissive victims (vs. provocative/aggressive). The victims are likely physically smaller, less assertive, more anxious, insecure, or more sensitive than bullies (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999). In addition, they struggle in establishing friendships, may lack self-esteem, decreasing the chances of reporting cases of bullying (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

A teacher admitted that Jana Udaya school is not forthcoming towards the issue of bullying. When I referred to the student code of conduct, it states that the students must not discriminate juniors, differently abled and students who lag, rather treat everyone equally and in a fair manner, however, it does not have a statement concerning bullying. Nevertheless, the respective teacher also mentioned that the students have not been given the freedom to bully; for instance, the message is spread that one should not use bad words, call names or tease any other individual. Olweus (1997) emphasized the significance of active involvement of the teachers in intervening in possible bullying situations and giving the clear message that bullying is not tolerated in the school and that it must stop. Also, such an intervention from school should be followed up frequently as well as closely supervised; otherwise the situation may easily become worse for the victim than before the intervention.

Besides, a teacher commented that there is no bullying among the teachers and even the teachers do not bully the students. The other teacher noted that the students in this school are well-behaved. Both respondents claimed that the students do not bully each other in front of teachers. However, one of them mentioned that the students have complained about cases of bullying, in response to which the teachers scold the bully. The teachers' retort indicates that the students do not bully each other in front of the teachers, however, the cases of bullying do exist, as per the complaints received from the students.

*“... students do not bully each other in front of teachers ...” (TR 1 & TR 3)*

The statement implies that the students are disciplined when teachers are around; they do not misbehave. Notwithstanding, it raises the question about the behavior of the students in absence of teachers. Do the students maintain the same level of discipline without teachers nearby? Do the students not bully only in presence of teachers or at other times as well? I think it is important for the teachers as well as the school administration to ensure that such deviant behavior does not occur even in absence of teachers or other school staffs. Students

not being bullied in front of teachers does not infer that bullying in the school does not exist at all.

Bullying is mostly a covert activity, it is kept as a secret from the teachers intentionally and can be difficult to detect (Courtney, Flynn, Henry, James, & Lawlor). A review made on bullying researches by the Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study notes that the nature of all kinds of bullying infers that such actions take place when there is low or absence of adult supervision. Many studies held in different countries have recorded that bullying is one of the most under-reported cases out of all abuses (Feder, 2007). The reason for under report is not only limited to the shame associated with victimization but according to Olweus et al. (2000) (as cited by Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study), the inconsequential or inappropriate response of teachers and/or parents is also one of the reasons.

The literature infers that the reaction the victims receive from their teachers and/or parents influences if the victim will share about the incident, how they feel about the incident, how they will react in future similar circumstances. The parents were asked about their reaction if their child had shared about the bullying incident. A parent shared that as their children are small, they simply tell that their friends beat them and in return, they beat them too. When the teacher was told about the incident, the teacher beat the bully. As part of parent's reaction, the respondent said:

*"I ask her not to get involved in such things (bullying). I tell her that it happened because of her own behavior." (PR 1)*

Initially, when the parent was asked about bullying, they mentioned that students tease each other and not bully. But later, the parent gave this example which is more of bullying than teasing. It refers that the parent is confused between the concept of bullying and teasing.

Further, blaming the victim is one of the common reactions to a bullying incident. The victims are blamed for behaving in a certain way encouraging the occurrence of bullying. Blaming the victim does not only avert the victim from sharing bullying experiences but it also makes the victim feel guilty. The likelihood to blame the victims surges the risk of moral disengagement making it easier to act as bullies, reinforcers and passive bystanders (Bandura, 2010; Hara, 2002; Hymel, Rocke-Henderson, & Bonanno, 2005). It infers that victim attributing<sup>4</sup> allows the witnesses to encourage the bully verbally or passively by remaining silent. However, those who have been the victims of bullying are more likely to adopt prosocial attitudes toward bullying victims (Garland, Policastro, Richards, & Miller, 2016). Hence, providing a proper response to the victims is crucial.

Besides, a teacher commented that not all students ask the bully to stop when encountering bullying, out of fear of getting bullied in return. In such cases, the students share with teachers about the incident with the expectation for the school to act against a bully and ask to maintain confidentiality. In contrary, a student shared about witnessing the incidence of bullying and in response asking the bully to stop doing so. The respondent had also informed

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<sup>4</sup> Attributing the cause of bullying to the victim is referred to as victim attributing (Thornberg & Knutsen 2011).

about the situation to the school, as a result, the school confronted the bully and persuaded them to cease the act of bullying and improve their behavior. Another student expressed being in a fight in response to urging the bully to stop.

When bullying is intervened by peers, 57% of bullying cease within 10 seconds. Thus, an important tactic to eliminate bullying is encouraging similar peer intervention. (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001). However, such defending behaviors might result in negative mental health outcomes because of the peer pressure or the experience of being a witness at the bullying event (Wu, Luu, & Luh, 2016). The peers who intervene face huge pressure when helping victims in addition to the concern that they themselves will be vulnerable as a next target. Because of such concerns, many peers are unwilling to intervene in bullying incidents (Salmivalli, 2009; Pöyhönen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2012; Gini & Pozzoli, 2013). Moreover, some witnesses would rather opt to join in the bullying to keep themselves on a safe side (Salmivalli, 2009). It takes immense courage to engage in prosocial attitudes towards bullying victims.

Likewise, a student shared about bully among friends and students bullying teachers. If the teachers are less qualified and their teaching ability is low, students underrate teachers. The student tried stopping the bullying but failed. Also, the respondent felt uncomfortable to inform the school about such incidences. Munn et al. (2007) state that Student Bullying of Teachers (SBT)<sup>5</sup> should rather be identified as an emerging global issue than the result of inadequate teaching abilities or flaws in the character of individual teachers.

Effective teaching and learning cannot occur in a school environment where teachers-who are supposed to lead, supervise and act as role models are rather targeted by students-whom they are supposed to lead, supervise and protect (Wet, 2010). SBT comprises of a distinct and unique power differential as the child has power over an adult, hence such scenario of power imbalance, repetition and intent requires special consideration and discussion (Garrett, 2014). Measures should be developed to examine the cases of SBT and appropriate intervention strategies should be implemented.

When the students were inquired if they have been bullied, three students said they have not been bullied, one told that neither have they been bullied nor have they bullied others. However, a student shared an incident when a friend stuck a paper tail on their back, in response to which the respondent got angry and scolded the bully. Then the respondent did not talk to the bully for few days and later the bully apologized.

Notwithstanding, two students mentioned that rather than bullying, it is more of teasing friends for fun. A teacher stated that the cases of bullying are not intense in this school and the acts are more of teasing than bullying. Hence, talking to the teaser and guiding them has been enough. Even a parent commented that it is common for students to tease each other when they study in same class and same school. Notwithstanding, the parent later told that teasing has led to negative consequences, so it is not always friendly. The respondent also stated encountering a case of bullying which was a result of a love affair; as a result, one of

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<sup>5</sup> In the late 1900s, the Student Bullying of Teachers (SBT) was first empirically examined by researchers in Finland (Kivivuori, 1996) and in the United Kingdom (Terry, 1998; Pervin and Turner, 1998).

the students had to leave school. Thus, when there are serious bullying cases, some of the students are warned to be expelled. Likewise, another parent indicated the existence of bullying, however, told that it has not led to any serious consequences.

According to Olweus (1997), teasing is a part of everyday social interactions among peers in school which is playful and relatively friendly in nature, such act is often recurrent but in most of the circumstances cannot be tagged as bullying. The act of teasing qualifies as bullying when the nature of teasing is degrading and offensive and is continued despite the clear signs of distress or opposition on the part of the target. Therefore, Olweus noted that it is crucial to set demarcation between malicious and more friendly, playful teasing, although the line between them is sometimes blurred. Further, the perception of the situation may to some extent depend on the perspective taken, that of the target or of the perpetrator (s). (Olweus, 1997)

Regarding the school intervention in Jana Udaya, the School Principal usually calls the students involved, gathers information about the incident and then bully is informed that their act is not right and is guided to improve their behavior. The immediate reaction from the teachers and parents also includes beating, scolding and threatening to expel the bully in case the issue gets intense. The respective parents are informed when the action is repetitive. It is rather vital to make the bully aware about his/her behavior which is wrong and harmful and convey that such action is not tolerated. It is crucial to work with the bully to understand the reasons he/she bullied for. The reasons might indicate that the bully requires additional services which underline the need for School Social Worker.

A student mentioned about complaint box in which the students can drop a note about such incidences, in case they are afraid to share about the incident in person. The Principal and child club members read the notes in the complaint box and together they handle the issue. However, the school has not conducted any programs in bullying. Despite the case, a parent ensured that all the teachers are knowledgeable about bullying. And a student told that programs against bullying are unnecessary as there are no cases of bullying in the school.

However, a parent shared about a program on Child Abuse organized by CWISH. The awareness program highlighted that if someone teases you and you don't like it, it is child abuse. When students were asked if any one of them has gone through such issues, the students said that they have not.

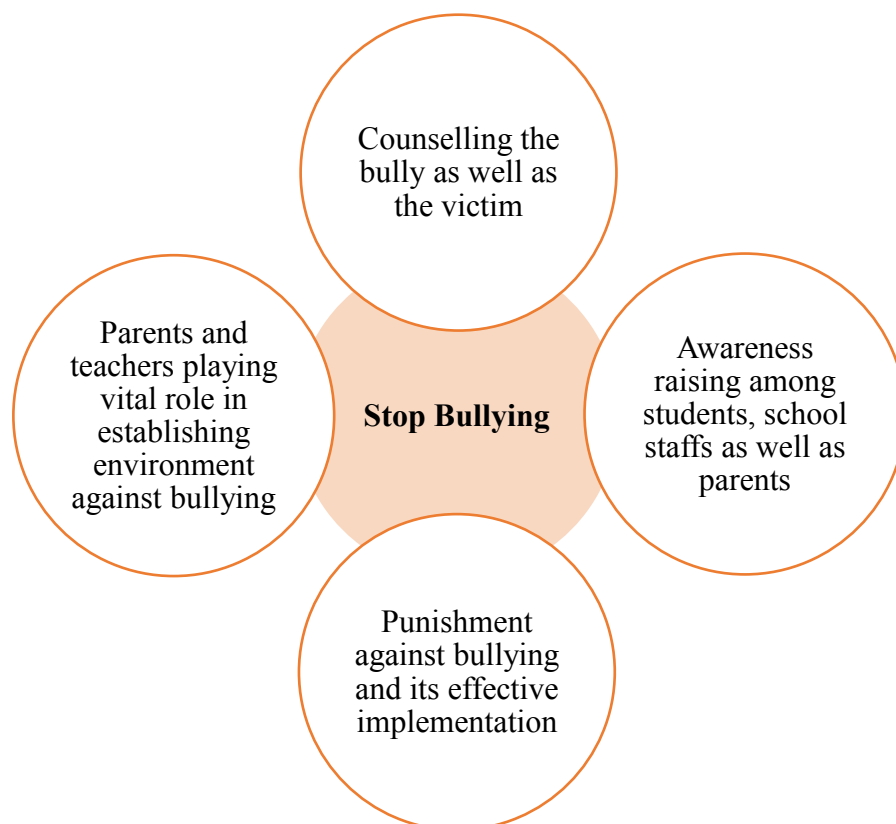
Since student's ability to learn and feel safe at school is highly likely to be affected by bullying, school social work should endeavor in addressing it, together with teachers, parents, and students. Eventually, the respondents were asked to give their thoughts on ways to stop bullying (Figure 12, p. 65). A teacher expressed the difficulty to stop bullying completely because it occurs due to age factor, type of companionship and the nature of family. If the environment individual lives in supports bullying, he/she will be influenced and it will be reflected through their behavior. Hence, when the teachers encounter or hear about such occurrences, the teachers try to address the situation.

One of the teachers stressed on counseling the students both by teachers as well as parents. The respondent emphasized on the role of parents as it is the result of the influence of the

home environment that the child learns to dominate others. Also, the teacher underlined that all three partners: the student, parent, and teacher should be equally involved to fight against bullying. Besides, a parent suggested to bring together both bully and victim and gather information about the incident from them, which is substantial. It is then crucial to make them aware of bullying and its impact.

Similarly, a student underlined the significance of spreading awareness about bullying and simultaneously conveying the message that the bullies will be punished. Another student stressed that one should be considerate of their action. Further, a student opined that first efforts should be made to try and eradicate the incidents of bullying. Punishment should be formulated against bullying and it should be implemented. The strong implementation will help spread the message among others about the consequences one will bear in response to bullying. The focus was also given to the role of parents, to which a student suggested that the parents should make bullying issues heard and take necessary steps against it. Also, the student told that the students should obey teachers and not bully one another.

The retorts concerning bullying infer that there are few cases of bullying and it has not been rampant. According to the respondents, teasing is more common among the peers which are fun and playful in nature and not malign. Awareness on bullying will help students and school staffs draw the line between teasing and bullying. The school should still put a close eye on the acts of the students and endeavor to eradicate bullying which is minimal at present.



*Figure 12 Measures to stop bullying according to the respondents*



### 7.3) Problem Solving

The physical, psychological, social health of the students impact their proper growth and development including their academic performance and achievement. It is thus salient to ensure that the students are physically, psychologically and socially healthy averting any factors which may hinder their development and capacity to perform at their best. At school age, children face many problems which impinge their psychological as well as social health. Teachers, parents and community members, as well as students themselves, are equally responsible to provide a favorable environment which supports the student's welfare.

The convenient environment encompasses the comfort that the students have in sharing their problems with someone at home and/or school and/or community. When the teachers of Jana Udaya School were inquired about whom do the student's approach when the students' have problems, most of the teachers perceived problems to be those related to the school and responded accordingly. Teachers said that the problems are initially shared with the class teacher and if the problem is not solved then the case goes to the principal. The dependency of problem-sharing on the nature of the problem was pointed out by one of the teachers. If the problem is faced by female students, specifically related to menstruation, the school has a female teacher assigned to deal with such problems. The respondent also told that the students initially try to deal with the problems on their own; if the situation gets intense, the school calls the parents and they work together to solve the problem.

Based upon the responses, class teacher is the major individual with whom the problems are shared. It is rational as the students interact more with the class teacher and the class teacher observes the students individually and more closely, and are more responsible towards each student. And for mezzo level intervention, the School Principal and the parents are approached.

I questioned the students if they feel secure in expressing the problems they encounter at home with someone at the school. Students responded that they generally talk to their sisters and friends about the problems. In case the problem is complicated, it is shared with their mother first. Nevertheless, the respondent denied expressing problems with school unless it is related to school. In the case of problems encountered at school, both the school and the parents are informed by the students. However, a student told that when the school problems are of the small level, it is not revealed to parents.

Sometimes the students ask their parents to share their problems with the school on their behalf. Besides, a parent told that the children express about the incidents they go through at school. But, the parents denied school sharing any problem their child goes through at school besides irregularity of students.

The students communicate the problem with the teacher initially and if the problem is not solved, the students inform the School Principal. A parent pointed out the necessity to inform School Principal and not only the teachers to solve a problem. By contrast, a parent expressed unfavorability in sharing the problems with the school; as per the respondent, although the school listens to the problem, they do not actually solve it. A student said that the teachers solve the problems related to school only, in the case of a problem related to

home, they suggest sharing it with parents. The role of the School Social Worker includes endeavoring to eliminate aspects impinging the performance, growth, and development of the student, both at school and home.

A teacher mentioned about some parents sharing about their children disobeying them and asking the teachers to help them deal with their children. In some cases, the students change their behavior after receiving suggestions from the teachers; however, in some cases, students do not improve at all. The role of School Social Worker is considered necessary to intervene under such circumstances who will work with teachers, parents as well as students and provide support in improving student's deviant behavior. Also, the School Social Worker can provide counseling services to the student and make referrals to additional services where needed.

All the students mentioned about sharing problems faced at home with parents and that faced at school with teachers as well as parents. Further, any kind of problems that the students encounter is shared with friends. It indicates that in general, the students prefer not to introduce problems at home with school. Also, the responses infer that children at this age trust their friends the most and are confident about the relationship they hold with friends.

The emotional support that the children receive from their relationship with others helps them with emotional adjustment as well as establishes a protective factor that prevents children against psychological stressors (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). Teachers who are emotionally supportive results to adult figure for the students who care about them listens to them and encourages them. A positive student-teacher relationship helps the student feel confident and manifest pro-social classroom behaviors, engage in peer play and comfortably explore the classroom (Spira & Fischel, 2005; Stuhlman & Pianta, 2009). The healthy relation between student-teacher is also closely associated with teacher's job satisfaction (OECD, 2009).

Besides, the peer relationships catalyze the development of communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving and stress management skills among the children that have long-term benefits (Bulotsky-Shearer, Dominguez, & Bell, 2012; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; McClelland, Morrison, & Holmes, 2000; Milteer & Ginsburg, 2012). When children develop these skills at a young age, it results in the creation of stable foundations for processing skills, solving problems, dealing with conflict, and communicating which helps them to regulate their emotions, engage in peer relationships, cope with difficult situation, and succeed academically (Sebanc, 2003).

Moreover, the ease that the students feel in problem-sharing is also determined by the encouragement they receive from school and parents to do so. Every respondent of this research agreed that the students are encouraged in talking about their problems both with the school as well as parents. A teacher underlined asking students if they have any problems and asking if anything can be done from school. Some students share but others hide their problems thinking they would appear to be weak. The respondent also stated that the students do not share the problems they have with friends to their parents.

Additionally, a teacher said that if they discern any student being tensed, they call the student individually and ask about the issue as the students might be reluctant expressing their situation in front of their friends. Even from the viewpoint of school social work, it is constructive to talk with students about their problems in secluded space; meanwhile, it is important to ensure that the student is being dealt by someone with whom he/she is comfortable. The students might be disturbed because of problem or occurrences and discussing it with someone or receiving the guidance might help the students deal with the issue and prevent further stress. Teachers can collaborate with School Social Workers in selecting and implementing an evidence-based strategy to deal with the student's problem.

School Social Workers help and guide students in dealing with their problems assuring a healthy school environment that shows sensitivity to students and their feelings and denotes as a haven for the student to voice their opinions and questions. Jana Udaya School has provided an ambiance where the students can talk about their problems directly with any teacher or even School Principal. If the student is uncomfortable sharing their problems in person, the school has a complaint box where the student can drop a note writing about the problem. The problems are then discussed among the teachers and necessary intervention is carried out. Generally, School Principal and parents are consulted only when the problems get intense.

In the case of academic problems, teachers told that students rarely raise academic problems despite the encouragement to do so because students think that if they do, they would be teased by other students. However, a teacher told that at present, female students initiate and ask questions even outside class hours. Besides, a parent pointed out their child commenting that the teachers do not answer most of the questions. The respondent justified that perhaps their child cannot speak out the confusions and hence does not receive a response from the teachers. Even a student mentioned that some teachers get angry when the students ask the same question twice. By contrast, another parent expressed teachers conveying students to ask questions as many times till their confusion is solved. Likewise, all students agreed on inquiring teachers about academic confusions and difficulties and additionally receiving suggestions from teachers.

While teachers reckon that students do not inquire academic questions, students and parents believe that they do share their academic struggles with the teachers. In my opinion, the lecture teaching method commonly employed by the teachers also inhibits student's participation in the classroom leading to asking fewer questions. Also, the teachers should ensure that they have created a comfortable classroom environment for the students to raise questions. Additionally, it should be conveyed that asking questions is rather helpful than disgracing which will encourage the students to raise questions without feeling ashamed.

Regarding general problems, a student commented that such problems will be solved effectively if school and parents coordinate. For instance, another student told that if the teachers convey to parents that their child is not studying because of specific reasons then the parents will be concerned at home as well and take some action. But, a student expressed that the school does not give much priority to such coordination. The student added that if one problem is left unsolved, it will lead to another problem, making the situation worse. In

my opinion, a School Social Worker requires working together with the teachers and parents in solving the student's problems. Depending on the nature of the problem, the environment in school as well as at home should be assessed to figure out the aspects causing the problem and suitable measures should be undertaken.

In addition to teaching, teachers also play an essential role in mentoring and nurturing students; they are the role models who listen to the students and look for signs of trouble in students. Besides teaching related responsibilities, the teacher also takes the roles of organizing, managing, counseling, observing and evaluating (Ulug, Ozden, & Eryilmaz, 2011). As a teacher, they should comprehend that their role relates to motivating learners to change and enhance their personal, social and professional skills to the best of their ability. They also play a prominent role in influencing the society, establishing a firm foundation towards the future of the society and ensuring the continuation of such actions (Temel, 1988, as cited by Ulug et al., 2011).

However, a teacher of Jana Udaya School indicated that the teachers are busy to devote time to solving students' problems.

*"... as the class times are limited, there is not enough time to dwell on the problems of the students." (TR 1)*

Most importantly, as most of the students of the school are not living with their parents, teachers should fill the gap of the adult figure, be supportive and make children comfortable in sharing their problems. It is essential for the teachers to ask the students if everything is ok and if there is anything they can do (TAPtalk, 2007). Moreover, the teachers should view students as individual people, and must be ready and willing to help them seek outside help as needed. In absence of adult figure, the social worker can play a parental role and simultaneously encourage teachers to provide support and guidance to the children when needed.

Besides, a teacher emphasized the role of PTA in solving problems as well, for instance: when a student remains absent for a longer period, PTA puts effort to find out the reason and address the issue. Likewise, a student pointed that SMC members are instrumental in addressing student's problems. A teacher commented that the school helps the students as per their capacity, but the important affair is that the school should be informed. The respondent added that in most of the cases, students maintain the secrecy of their problems and try to solve on their own, and it has worked by far. When students initiate to solve problems by themselves, they get the opportunity to learn coping and problem-solving skills. However, at times the students need guidance from the adult figures – teachers or parents while the students are learning how to handle situations themselves. Other community members or organizations are significantly approached for financial support but not commonly for dealing with other problems among students such as mental disturbances, drug abuse and so on. A student shared that help from community members or organizations are not sought because they are not aware of such organizations.

Moreover, when the question related to counselors and psychologists was raised, a student opined that many students of this school have mental disorders significantly because most

of the students do not live with their parents. Under such circumstances, the students do not get to study when they want to and carry out other activities. Because of the disturbances, many students are not able to focus on their studies. Likewise, a teacher mentioned about an organization-CWISH handling mental disturbances among students through counseling. A student including two teachers stressed the importance of consultation with counselors and psychologists to tackle mental issues of the students. Nevertheless, a teacher and two students commented that teachers counsel them when they have any problems.

Good mental health is substantial for the students to succeed in school as well as in life (National Association of School Psychologists, 2006). The socio-emotional and mental health support helps the student to perform better academically, have improved learning, have better behavior, and feel more connected with others (ibid). Schools are ideal settings for mental health services (ibid) because the first signs of mental health issues often emerge at school (Richardson, Morrisette, & Zucker, 2012).

Whether the emotional disturbance is minor requiring basic support or is a more complicated mental health issue demanding a more intensive intervention, a comprehensive school-based approach<sup>6</sup> enables a full range of options to schools that deploy them (ibid). Social workers can provide wellness, education, and prevention whereas the team members from the community mental health organization can be approached in need of intensive services (ibid).

#### **7.4) Educational Values and Training**

It is vital for the students, parents as well as teachers to comprehend the value of education in a child's life. While parents must get actively involved in school activities and establish favorable environment at home to support their child's education, which has been discussed in previous sections; teachers should ensure that they adopt effective teaching learning techniques and participate in training to sharpen their teaching skills.

According to the Child-Friendly Schools Manual developed by UNICEF (2009), for teaching learning environment to be effective, it should comprise of diverse interactive methodologies, focusing also on the different learning styles of girls and boys and hence establishing an environment which is stimulating, participatory and child-friendly. Rather than a teacher taking the sole authority, children should be the active participants in observing, exploring, listening, reasoning, questioning and 'coming to know'. The manual further states that the teachers should emphasize on participatory learning rather than giving lectures in didactic style. For this, the teachers should be given the training to reach sustained transformation in the classroom; in addition, be involved in educational planning. (UNICEF, 2009)

The respondents were asked to define the effective teaching-learning environment. A teacher shared about the general concept that people in Nepalese community hold: teaching is considered effective when the theoretical part is emphasized. As a result, the quantity of the answers is focused more than the quality, the marks the students achieve in the examination

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<sup>6</sup> A comprehensive approach in which a supplementary team of community health professionals is integrated into the school service array. (Richardson, Morrisette, & Zucker, 2012)

is overemphasized and hence the tools to measure the practicality of the theoretical knowledge are weak.

Personally, I feel that such notion and practice has highly influenced the way teachers teach and the way students learn. Teachers focus more on bookish and theoretical knowledge and design lesson plans prioritizing the examination; the students are more concentrated in passing the exam, writing long answers thus adapting rote learning rather than prioritizing gaining the knowledge and developing analytical skills. Also, the practice of memorization has led to the continuation of academic underachievement. In the case of parents, they appreciate when their children are given more theory-based homework and achieve high marks in examination, sidelining the actual knowledge attained by their children. All such means prioritizes theoretical knowledge over practical knowledge.

Also, the defect in the curriculum which gives more priority to theoretical knowledge was stressed by the respondent. Research has identified that sole focus on test scores and a narrow curriculum obstructs the harness of creativity and effort needed to assist students to develop traits as belief in self-determination, independence, and cultural appreciation (Isaac, 2015). The respondent mentioned that despite the situation, the teachers try to focus on every aspect of the students, not solely on the 2-hours exam papers. The teachers analyze class assessments, their daily activities, behavior, attendance, homework performance to make the decision to promote the student.

Moreover, teaching learning materials<sup>7</sup> have a significant role to play in the establishment of effective teaching learning environment. Learning based on activity employs numerous teaching learning materials with the emphasis on student interaction to learn new concepts; whereas context-specific learning materials enhance the process (Lewis, 2016).

Jana Udaya school has a scarcity of the teaching-learning materials. Explicitly, insufficiency and dysfunctionality of the equipment in science and computer laboratories were highlighted by the respondents, significantly teachers and students. A student expressed that they feel deprived of knowledge, experiments, principals related to Science without practical classes. By contrast, a parent referred that the school has adequate teaching-learning material for secondary classes. Another parent shared about their child commenting that teachers are good and they teach properly; however, the respondent expressed being unmindful of the ways the teachers teach and the employment of teaching-learning materials.

As the materials used for teaching learning support student learning and increase student's success (Ministry of Education, Guyana, 2016), it is crucial that the school and the teachers prioritize the use of such materials. These materials also provide students with the opportunity to practice a new skill gained in the class and allow students to explore the knowledge independently (ibid). Furthermore, teaching learning materials also help teachers in delivering the lesson successfully, effectively and easily (Chanda, Phiri, & Nkosha).

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<sup>7</sup> Teaching learning materials refers to “a spectrum of educational materials that teachers use in the classroom to support specific learning objectives, as set out in lesson plans”. Some of the examples are flashcards, videos, games, computer software, and so on. (Lewis, 2016)

Hence, the significance of the use of teaching learning material must be brought to the attention of teachers and school.

Further, in Jana Udaya School, teachers generally use lecture method, consistent with the research by Parajuli & Das (2013). The more emphasis on theoretical knowledge, inadequate teaching-learning materials and the need for less effort from the teachers justify them using lecture method. However, it is vital to comprehend that lecture method alone does not support the holistic development of the student, significantly when it is about independent thinking and self-exploration. Whereas interactive education creates a deeper impact, it motivates team work, draws students' interests, involves application and deals with real life situations, develops a better understanding and the knowledge retains in mind when learned practically (Singh, 2014).

A teacher remarked that the lecture method solely should not be used in today's world as it is least useful in grabbing the attention of the students. Demonstration method, discussion method, group method and use of teaching materials, as well as ICT, was suggested by the teachers to be more effective teaching methods. Nonetheless, two of the teachers commented that they are not encouraged in using teaching materials because they need to devote time to prepare such materials and they do not receive any incentive in return. Further, as the present classroom environment is not interactive in nature, a teacher emphasized on the use of the learner-centered method to motivate participation from students. Besides, a teacher pointed that the use of ICT will create a fun environment in the classroom and will also decrease the absenteeism rate.

In the case of students, one of them mentioned about teachers occasionally using group method. A student also commented about teachers asking questions and correcting in the case of wrong answers by the students. By contrast, another student expressed a lack of sharing of thoughts and opinions of students in the classroom and teaching solely based on the book. Although some teaching-learning materials are available in school such as geographical maps, charts, these are seldom used. Parents and students emphasized providing practical knowledge which enhances creativity within the children and offers a platform to learn about the real world.

Since a School Social Worker also plays a role in promoting a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence, he/she should ensure that appropriate teaching methods are executed and the classroom environment is participatory and interactive. The School Social Worker can cooperate with teachers in executing learner-centered teaching method as well as work with teachers, students, and parents in developing teaching-learning materials.

The establishment of productive teaching learning environment also requires monitoring the teaching learning. The monitoring of the teaching and learning assists in identifying the areas for improvement and key priorities for development (Glasgow City Council Education Services, 2010) and enables professional reflection on practice within the classrooms as well as within the school (HM Inspectorate of Education , 2007). To monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning, the school should figure out if the curriculum is appropriate for

children's needs, if the teaching methods suit the needs of all children, if the staffs focus on motivating the students, if the school is more specific about meeting individual needs and the ways parents can be involved more effectively (ibid).

In the context of Jana Udaya School, the effectiveness of teaching learning and teaching methods is not examined timely and effectively. School Principal visits the class occasionally to observe the teaching whereas, the School Monitoring Officer seldom visits the school for monitoring. The school lacks the mechanism to appraise overall teaching learning. Even the evaluation of teachers is not conducted. Teachers commented that direct feedback from the students is not taken as a part of teacher evaluation; however, the teachers collect feedback through exam papers – based on students' performance. In the case of students, they mentioned about teachers inquiring them if they understood the lessons. From the school social work viewpoint, monitoring the teaching learning is essential for the continuous improvement of the teaching effectiveness in the school.

The support from school administration, as well as parents in making the learning environment effective, was underlined. According to a teacher, the school administration should provide adequate teaching-learning materials and the parents should send their children to school when there are extra classes. For the teachers, they should not simply rely on textbooks but be enthusiastic and search for new teaching materials. In the case of students, they should be attentive and active, as they play the major role, the teacher added.

A parent emphasized the necessity of healthy relationship between the teacher and the student to establish an effective teaching-learning environment. Additionally, the need for teachers to listen to the student's ideas, thoughts and opinions were pointed out. In many schools, teachers discourage students from speaking their viewpoint or the students are afraid to express their thoughts. In such scenario, the teachers should motivate the students from putting forward their opinions by adapting teaching methods which establish such environment. When students talk about their perspectives, it enhances their creativity, critical thinking as well as confidence.

For a constructive teaching learning environment, a student highlighted the role of both teachers and students, where teachers should teach the students without punishing them and the students should study well and obey teachers. Punishing students generate fear among them which obstructs their capability to perform at their best. Another student commented that the teachers should be adopting diverse teaching methods to make the class exciting, draw the attention of the students and in overall make it easy for the students to understand. The respondent added that the classroom infrastructure should be maintained for the teaching-learning environment to be competent. In addition, a student mentioned that the teachers should teach with intensity, energy, and enthusiasm because of which the students will be more active and interested to study. Similarly, the need for the teachers to respond properly and effectively to student's confusions was notified by another student.

Good teachers ensure effective classroom management through the establishment of a culture that is conducive to teaching and learning, one that's built on a foundation of mutual respect (Urban, 2008). The most demanding and time-consuming part of the teaching is



preparation, the teachers should be prepared for the class and in responding to the inquiries of the students (ibid). Further, the beliefs, dedication, and attitude of the teacher are influential in establishing a teaching-learning environment which is innovative, creative, motivative and effective. The teacher should have the passion and the enthusiasm and should love and enjoy what they are doing (ibid). Such character of teachers reflects in their teaching and behavior leading to a fun and energetic classroom.

Besides, there are several classes in the school which are divided into two sections. The school has tried few criteria to divide the class sections. Initially, the students were separated into sections as per their roll number; odd roll numbers in one section and even in the other. A student expressed preferring this criterion as both the capable and incapable students are together. However, presently the students are divided following the method of ‘tracking’<sup>8</sup>. As a result, students who can work hard on their own and require general guidance are kept in one section whereas the students who were incapable requiring teachers to work hard are kept in another section. The incapable students were also offered remedial teaching. Nevertheless, this type of section division resulted in a lack of competitive feeling amongst the students.

It was also inquired if the teachers attend any training held either by the school or any other organizations. Teachers and students answered that teachers regularly attend subject-related and professional training organized by District Education Office (DEO) and other organizations, but such training programs have not been held by the school. A parent shared that teachers share their learning with PTA as well. Likewise, a student pointed that in addition to qualification, it is essential for the teachers to know how to teach, how to act in a specific situation and how to grab student’s attention. Training help teachers learn such techniques. Nonetheless, a teacher expressed that the knowledge from the training is not applied as the school and classroom environment is not equivalent and resources are inadequate. Even a student told that they have not seen any changes among the teachers despite the training they attend.

### **7.5) Punishment and Control of Students**

Corporal punishment in schools of Nepal prevails even today with the belief that when students are punished, they remain submissive to authorities and disciplined. While teachers encourage corporal punishment, even the parents insist the teachers to use corporal punishment. The entrenched belief is also supported by the laws which permit punishing children.

There is a legal defense for parental corporal punishment in Chapter 9 of the *Muluki Ain* 1963 (General Code), which punishes hurt and batter but states in article 4 (as cited by Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2017):

*“guardians and teachers shall not be held responsible for grievously hurting a child in the course of education or defense,”*

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<sup>8</sup> Tracking is segregating students into different classrooms based upon their ability. (Study.com)

And, Article 7 of the Children Act 1992 exempts

*“the act of scolding and minor beating to the child by his father, mother, member of the family, guardian or teacher for the interests of the child” from the prohibition of cruel treatment.”*

In 2005, the Supreme Court rules that the restrictive clause in article 7 was unconstitutional and declared the clause *“or give him/her minor beating”* null and void (Mr. Devendra Ale et al. v Office of the Prime Minister & Cabinet et al., Supreme Court decision 6 January 2005) (as cited by Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2017).

The clauses indicate that corporal punishment is lawful in Nepal. It also infers that parents, guardians, and teachers are allowed to hurt and/or beat the child for education, defense and for the interests of the child. In general, the country accepts that a child should be punished to educate them, to discipline them and believes it is for the best of the child. Such clauses imply that it is pertinent to punish children during upbringing, for their faults and/or disciplinary problems.

Nevertheless, the present constitution of Nepal (2015) comprises of a section in article 39 (Government of Nepal, 2015) which states that:

*“(7) No child shall be subjected to physical, mental, or any other forms of torture at home, in school, or in any other places or situations.”*

It also provides for the right of every person to *“live with dignity”* (art. 16) and to *“equal protection of law”* (art. 18). However, it does not explicitly prohibit all corporal punishment. Also, this legal reform should be disseminated to the children and the adults for its successful implementation; simultaneously, knowledge related to positive and non-violent approaches to discipline should be promoted (CVICT, Nepal, 2004).

Corporal punishment is customary in Jana Udaya School, although the teacher's code of conduct clearly indicates its prohibition. Out of three teachers, one of the teachers admitted punishing the students whereas two of the teachers admitted that the students were punished in the past but not at present. The former respondent demanded that the teachers should be given effective alternatives to punishment if the students are not to be punished. The latter respondents referred to the introduction of child-friendly schools concept and child-related laws getting stricter as contributory factors in stopping teachers from physically punishing students. However, in extreme cases of misbehavior, students still get slapped and scolded.

Regarding parents, all of them agreed that the students are punished. The students are made to stand outside the class, they are forced to hold their ears and sit up and down continuously, and are also beaten. In some scenarios, the students are firstly given warning, if they repeat the behavior they are threatened to be expelled. There are times when parents are called and school and parents together plan to work with the student. One of the students also remarked the cooperation between parents and teachers to help students improve.

Students had diverse retorts; three of them said that the students are punished however, others told that teachers offer advice to students when they do something inappropriate and

suggest working on it. On one hand, the former respondents mentioned about students being warned to be expelled, beaten, on the other hand, the later respondents commented students are given chances to improve and teachers ask them to put efforts in studying better as the future depends on the choices they make at present. A student mentioned about government announcement to prohibit physical punishment and the need for everyone to abide by it. Another student shared that punishment is usually given to students who are not good.

Few of the students mentioned about the support and suggestion they receive from teachers to improve their actions and behavior. Such response from teachers is accommodating for the students which will motivate them to improve their actions and cease unacceptable behaviors. The guidance the students obtain from the teachers impacts not only their adolescence but also their adulthood. Therefore, it is critical for the teachers to focus on acknowledgment and reinforcement, and teach students proper behaviors, reinforce desired behaviors as needed, and keep them motivated throughout the year.

A teacher admitted that being strict and punishing the students is a temporary way of disciplining them which will later leave the students to be directionless. Notwithstanding, the teacher also mentioned that the act of punishment is entrenched in our society. It has been a tradition to threaten and/or punish the child to discipline them and it is reflected in the child's behavior as well. If a teacher is strict, the students do every task assigned to them; but, if the teacher is lenient, the students do not obey them. Also, when students are not punished, the school appears to be weak and undisciplined, as punishment is one of the tools which make a favorable impression on parents and helps flourish the school reputation. Having said that, the teacher commented that due to the minimization of punishment, the students are less afraid of the teachers. Another teacher added that the child-friendly environment is spoiling the children; as teachers do not scold or beat the students, their respect towards teachers is decreasing. Thus, in general, the teachers hold the belief that the students should be threatened and they should be fearful of the teachers and other school staffs.

*“Many teachers have the wrong belief that children can only be scared or forced into learning. They must understand that fear will only push them further away from learning,”*

*As cited by The Himalayan Times (2016)*

Based on the study<sup>9</sup> conducted by Center for Victims of Torture, Nepal (2004) on violence against children in Nepal, in a fearful situation, children tend to imitate and repeat mechanically whatever their teacher asks them to mug up, this disables the child's mind to accept, understand, appreciate and learn things naturally. The study states that although beatings control a child's behavior, they are not likely to teach children about self-control; they may teach a child a kind of fearful respect for an adult, but respect is better and lasting when it is reciprocated between both parties. Moreover, when a child is punished on a frequent basis, they lose interest in their studies, further weakening their performance; thus,

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<sup>9</sup> Supported by UNICEF Nepal

it creates a vicious cycle with more and more punishment being given (CVICT, Nepal, 2004).

According to Mahbub ul Haq and Khadija Haq in the "Human Development in South Asia 1998", "in Nepal, 14 percent of children claimed to have dropped out of school because they feared the teacher." (Haq 1998: 81). (CVICT, Nepal, 2004).

As stated by Child-Friendly Schools Manual by UNICEF (2009), the child-friendly schools believe that discipline is requisite to assist children to learn correct behaviors and to maintain classroom order, but nonviolent discipline and child rights protection are their traits. It is vital to make teachers aware of the emotional and psychological damage corporal punishment can have on children (UNICEF, 2009). Through in-service training and mentoring by the school head, the teachers learn and implement effective discipline which respects children's rights and contributes to a positive learning environment (ibid). When children learn and succeed in school in the absence of corporal punishment, eventually the parents will accept the school's approach and may gradually change their thinking about corporal punishment.

*"Violence against children is taken so casually, it is appalling. Even at homes, where children should feel the safest, they are often subjected to violence over the smallest slights." Tarak Dhital, director of the Central Child Welfare Board.*

*As cited by Himalayan News Service (2016)*

In addition to the teachers, even the parents and guardians punish their children. As mentioned above, scolding the children even for the minor mistakes they make, threatening, beating and grounding them, is a common trend in many households in Nepal. This trend has been passed on from many generations. The beating and humiliation implemented in the home would perpetuate the practice in the society (CVICT, Nepal, 2004). Hence, the violence should be eliminated from the home and the society to control the violence at schools. Parental influence is paramount and parents should cooperate with teachers to adequately shape students' conduct and character.

*Sri Mahant Govind Dasji has cautioned: "When a child is beaten, he becomes stubborn. And a stubborn child becomes a confused child. When the child knows that the ultimate punishment given to him will be beating, he becomes mentally prepared. This is not the solution." (The Hindu. June 17, 2003).*

*As cited by Center for Victims of Torture, Nepal, 2004*

Punishing the children is considered as a disciplinary method to correct the unacceptable behavior of the students by causing physical and/or psychological injury to students by teachers. Even the parents immensely pressurize the teachers to inflict punishment on their children to maintain strict discipline. There are times when students have medical or psychological reasons which disable them to focus and concentrate. Corporal punishment is a least effective tool in addressing such problems. It will rather intensify the difficulties, making students to stay away from classes or even drop out from school. Further, when teachers use corporal punishment, it gives the message to both students and parents that

employing physical power is an acceptable way to obtain what one wants. And, significantly, children imitate actions of their teachers. (CVICT, Nepal, 2004)

Besides, a parent shared an incident in the school where due to excess level of punishment, a student fell sick. Another parent stated that punishment should be given but not to the extent that student faces difficulty and feel devalued. But, it is significant even for the students to understand that they are punished because of their own fault. The respondent opined punishment being good for girls but bad for boys as they are negatively affected and are mentally disturbed. Even a student stated that as the teenagers these days are a bit more aggressive when they are scolded it might cause mental disturbances, such as frustration. Further, aftermath the punishment, either the students realize their mistake and improve or the students take punishment as a cause of revenge as not all students understand and accept their faults. Besides, one of the parents stressed that punishment should be given and justified that although the school punishes students, it is not harsh.

Based on the responses, there are students who improve their behavior and performance after being punished, however, most of them go through physical and most significantly – mental repercussions. The author of the book “Teacher and Child”, Haim Ginott (1972) stated that punishing a child will only make them enraged and uneducable; it produces hostility, insecurity, and vengefulness among students not making them want to improve. He emphasized on finding an alternative as punishment should never be used to control misconduct.

In addition to suffering from bruises, cuts, and broken bones from the physical violence, it is highly likely for the children to develop feelings of helplessness, worthlessness, aggressiveness, fear, or social withdrawal (CVICT, Nepal, 2004). The study conducted by Center for Victims of Torture (2004) also figured that students who cannot resist teacher’s action or cannot retaliate are more vulnerable to punishment. As a result, it leaves children frightened and mentally disturbed leading to drop-outs (ibid). At worst, the children learn that when discipline is required, violence is the only possible response to achieve it (ibid).

The impact of punishment does not limit to the student life. In a study conducted among 8,000 families in the US in 1994, M. A. Strauss indicated that children who are beaten more have higher possibility to become more aggressive with their siblings (Straus, 2001). They are likely to develop less adequate consciences, experience more depression and are inclined as adults to physically attack their spouses (ibid).

Arriving late is one of the common problems in this school. As most of the students are domestic workers, they go through various situations which hinder them from reaching school on time. Considering the situation, no strict actions are taken by the school; they are rather asked to be punctual. Also, the teachers talk to the parents and ask them to send the children to school on time. However, if arriving late continues for a longer period, students are warned for few times and then sent back home. There are also cases where students are not allowed to attend few classes in case they arrive late. Many students have started arriving on time following the action.

Similar steps are taken when the student has low attendance. Despite informing parents about the circumstance, most of the parents remain unaware and unconcerned about their child's low attendance as they are very busy earning a livelihood. Therefore, teachers rather convey to the students that low attendance is disadvantageous for them and if they come to school regularly, they can put efforts to make way for their bright future.

A student conveyed that as the school has been announced as a Peace Zone, the students should not be punished but be treated well. To ensure acceptable behaviors from students, they should be informed about dos and don'ts beforehand so that they do not make mistake and hence are not punished. Further, when students do mischiefs, the reason behind should be figured out and appropriate actions should be taken rather than punishing them.

Likewise, the teacher who employs corporal punishment commented that if teachers want to correct student's behavior without punishing, teachers should have the capacity to understand the child's overall environment, which takes time. As per the teacher, it is important to note that child does not become bad on their own, there are many contributing factors such as family background. Even a student said that some of the students focus more on their studies but others do not care at all probably because of their condition at home. These responses reflect the ecological perspective referring that the student's misbehavior is also the result of the interaction with external environment hence requiring intervention strategy to focus on school and parents as well.

A student suggested that it is vital for school to encourage positive behavior among students. Also, the teachers should avoid pointing the student's mistake in front of everyone, it should be done privately or in presence of parents as the nature of students is different when parents are around. Besides, all teachers agreed that rather than teachers, counselors can be asked to deal with such situations.

The students act mischievously not only at school but also at home and other environments they are exposed to. When the act turns malicious, they are usually punished by teachers and parents. While punishment may help students to improve behavior for a short-term, its adverse effect hampers the student during student life as well as their adult life. Comprehending harmful physical and mental consequences of punishment, both teachers and parents should employ positive discipline techniques to regulate the students. School Social Workers can support the teachers and parents in implementing positive discipline strategies. Additionally, teachers and parents play crucial roles in helping the children realize their mistakes and in educating students about the impact of deviant behaviors onto themselves as well as others. Ultimately, they can work together and strategize to ameliorate the child's behavior.

## **8) Education Rights and Advocacy**

The School Social Workers put upon efforts to maintain a standard school quality and educational outcomes while tackling with structural inequalities and abortive school processes. Putting emphasis on the diversity and socioeconomic justice, School Social Workers endeavor to eliminate any issues triggering school failure and educational disparities.

### 8.1) School Environment

In this research, the school environment comprises of the indicators such as the school activities and student participation, school facilities, learning, management, adequacy, and features of the overall school infrastructure. This section explains the school environment of Jana Udaya School along with the perspectives of the respondents towards different aspects of the school environment. The school environment affects the interest of the teachers to teach and students to learn, which influences the teaching effectiveness including student achievement and development. Establishing and maintaining proper school environment is also vital for the overall health and safety of students, school staffs as well as visitors.

In this school, every student can take part in all school activities. Regarding this, a teacher respondent commented that the school provides the opportunity to every student and does not introduce any specific reasons for which the students are not allowed to participate. One of the parent and student shared that the students participate in the school activities as per their interest. A student stated that:

*“In case some of the students could not participate in any school activity, they are given another chance.” (SR 4)*

Examples of extra-curricular activities (ECA) conducted in this school are: art competition, quiz competition, debate competition, sports competition, cultural programs, and festival celebrations. The child club plays an active role in organizing these events and collaborates with SMC and school administration. The school receives materials for ECA as a donation from various organizations annually.

Besides the ECA sessions on Fridays, the students can use the sports materials during lunch breaks. However, a student respondent claimed that previously the students could borrow the sports materials from the school child club during break times, but at present, the students have access to football only and not to carom board, badminton, table tennis. The respondent added that the reason behind was unknown.

Likewise, a teacher respondent expressed that despite the opportunity, some of the students cannot partake in mostly because some of the students who are domestic laborers are not sent to school by their guardians to attend sports events. Working as a domestic laborer is one of the prominent factors impinging on the productive participation of students in diverse school activities. Some of the guardians send the children to school only when the school have classes running and not when the school days are solely dedicated to events or any ECA.

In my opinion, school activities are crucial for the social, emotional, cognitive development and growth of the students. The students procure diverse life skills such as problem solving, communication, interpersonal, team building, creativity, and critical thinking influencing their personality and behavior. It is vital for the School Social Workers to ensure the accessibility of all children to wider educational opportunities leading to meaningful learning experiences at school. Additionally, according to NCES (1995), extracurricular activities offer a pathway for strengthening the classroom lessons, applying the academic

skills in real life and are hence a substantial part of well-rounded education. NCES further refers to a research directing that students' participation in ECA may augment their sense of engagement or attachment to their school and thus result to reduction of the likelihood of school failure and drop out (Lamborn et al, 1992; Finn, 1993).

According to a teacher, the other reason for which the students do not participate in ECA is also that they are apathetic, lack enthusiasm and are unwilling to carry out activities on their own. A research report by Willms (2013) indicated that factors such as family-related risk factors including poverty, low parental education or poor cognitive ability account to low student engagement during the secondary school. As studies underline the relation between poverty and academic challenges at school (McLloyd, 1998), in these circumstances, a social worker could intervene in improving living conditions for the children at risk.

Proper school infrastructure is also one of the crucial components contributing to the effective school environment. This school is a two-storeyed building (Figure 13) with a total of 19 rooms which includes classrooms, staff rooms, laboratories, and library. In a classroom, there are in average 20-25 students. Besides the ECD classes, all



*Figure 13 A section of main school building*

the other classrooms have traditional classroom seating arrangement (Figure 14, p. 82). The classroom is divided into two columns for student seating area and the position of the teacher is in the front of the classroom. One of the teachers mentioned that the school building is old and the classrooms are very narrow and hence there is the compulsion to follow the ancient classroom setting. Another teacher commented on the lack of appropriate resources for adopting U-shape or C-shape setting as taught in training. Likewise, a parent stressed that the physical environment of the classroom is unfitting for the pre-primary classes. Two of the students expressed that the classroom structure is unsuitable.

A student commented that:

*"I do not think the classrooms are managed. The classrooms are nearby the toilet and the smell is spread up to the class." (SR 4)*

Nevertheless, a parent opined:

*"I think the classrooms are good, this school being a government school. It would have been better if we could improve it. But the present classroom state is good as well." (PR 2)*

As reported by McCorskey and McVetta (1978), Hurt, Scott, and McCroskey suggest that if the objective of the class chiefly is information dissemination, the traditional arrangement



is best as it reduces the interaction between the students and places the predominant interaction focus on the teacher. Minchen (2007) states that the suitable seating arrangement in classroom influences the students' participation, thinking and appropriate comments which can also have a positive impact on the learning. He further mentions that the type of interaction resulting from the apt seating arrangement enables the teachers to make their lesson presentation more active and collaborative among students. Hence, the classroom seating arrangement should be carefully applied as it, in one hand, induces effective student participation and on the other hand, establishes an environment for productive teaching.



*Figure 14 An example of a school classroom applying the traditional seating arrangement*

Studies conducted in different regions of the world have figured that the classroom climate is one of the salient contributors for student achievement (e.g.: Reynolds and Muijs, 1999). Thus, a careful attention should be given to acoustics, room temperature, proper lighting, classroom furniture and seating arrangement (Lewinski, 2015). It is substantial to ensure that background noise does not disturb the classes and the voice of teacher is properly heard. This

school has a ground in the middle surrounded by the school building. Hence, the noise from one room easily reaches the other. Concerning this, a student mentioned: (Reynolds & Muijs, 1999)

*“The noise from other classrooms disturbs us. While teaching, if a child cries, the teachers remain silent for a while hence causing a distraction.” (SR 4)*

Besides, the temperature of the room should be maintained. If the classroom is too warm, the students will feel drowsy and will feel restless if it is cold and thus lose concentration. Hence, a comfortable temperature will lead to longer attention span. Similarly, proper lighting helps the students to remain alerted which can be maintained through natural daylight or artificial light as an alternative. The classrooms in this school have enough windows and a door for proper airflow and daylight, maintaining the temperature of the room as well as the lighting. However, the lighting in the primary classrooms is insufficient.

The furniture in the classrooms of this school consists of benches for the students and a whiteboard. The classrooms are also decorated with the artworks prepared by the students (Figure 15, p. 83). Displaying children's artwork makes them proud and builds up the sense of ownership and belonging among them (Killeen, Evans, & Danko, 2003; Maxwell & Chmielewski, 2008; Short, 2007). Kim, Park, & Lee (2001) stated, “...they can be used to make teachers, parents and visitors aware of the children's potential, their developing capacities, and what goes on in the school”. Through the artworks, I learned the lessons the

students have been taught and the works they have been carrying out. It also reflected imagination and creativity of the students.

Under these circumstances, the role of the School Social Worker would be to work closely with the teachers in establishing appropriate and effective classroom setting, focusing on its major aspects and being mindful of the resources available. Also, the students can be actively engaged in this process which will help establish their ownership towards the classroom.



*Figure 15 An example of a school classroom exhibiting artworks of the students*

Further, the school has a staff room with few tables and plenty of chairs allowing the teachers to share workspace (Figure 16, p. 84). It also has a locker where the teachers can safely store their belongings and a separate cupboard to keep books and copies. The walls of the staff room are filled with artworks disseminating information about the details of the school, the class and exam schedules, school calendar, details of teachers, responsibilities of different committees, the characteristics of genuine teacher, objectives of pre-primary, primary and secondary education, and a notice board with announcements, upcoming events and crucial information. Armstrong (n.d.) remarks that the information displayed on the walls of the staff room can also be an indication of what the school values and gives importance to. Moreover, the room also embraces souvenirs, appreciation and award emblems the school received. The teaching-learning material, sports material, and first-aid box are also stored in the staffroom but needs to be managed.

When I visited the school, I spent most of the time in the staffroom. Meantime, I observed that all the secondary level teachers usually gather up in the staff room at the beginning of the day. The teachers who had leisure time usually stayed in the staff room with other teachers which usually led to informal conversations such as sharing experiences, incidents, seeking and giving advice to each other. Besides, the teachers also utilized the space to prepare for their class and check the assignments and examination papers. This staff room also served as the place where the visitors are welcomed by the school.

Such scenario reflects that the school provides a platform for the teachers to build and grow relationships among each other. Despite the hectic class schedules, teachers have space where they can relax and ask for suggestions from their colleagues as needed. McGregor (2000) states that a staffroom is a place where patterned interactions take place, from storytelling to planning joint projects which are suggested by Miriam Ben Peretz as probably a crucial effort to improve schooling. Also, the staff room can be referred to as a ‘back region’ where teachers can protect their identities which are frequently compromised in the frontal contexts of the classroom (McGregor, 2000).



*Figure 16 The staffroom of the school with informative charts on the walls*

Besides, I received contradictory views from the respondents regarding the school library. Most of the respondents remarked that the school library is closed in the meantime. Teachers mentioned that library has not been in use for approximately 2 years and the library deficits useful books and does not have a librarian. On the other hand, the students expressed the inability of the school to effectively use and manage the library. One of the students shared that this state of library inhibits the urge of the students to study more. Another student noted the inaccessibility of the library due to its bad shape aftermath earthquake of 2015. However, two students commented that they could visit the library once a month and read books as per their interest. A parent expressed being unknown about the situation of the school library.

Based on the observation, the school library was not used throughout my school visit. The unavailability of the library deprives the student of gaining additional knowledge supporting the curriculum as well as gaining real world information whereas the teachers are deprived of effectively formulating the curriculum, designing the lectures and retrieving updated information.

Several types of research have been conducted to investigate the connection between school libraries and overall student achievement. Referring to the key research findings because of



pre-1990 studies, Lonsdale (2003) notes that good school libraries and services of a school librarian result in students performing considerably better on tests for basic research skills. Also, the performance of the student is significantly better in reading comprehension and in their ability to express ideas effectively in related to their reading.

As library directly influences the student achievement, a School Social Worker must ensure its availability and accessibility. The teachers, students as well as parents can be engaged in managing the library whereas the community members can be approached to donate suitable books for the students.

Additionally, maintaining delivery of proper water and sanitation is vital for the constructive school environment. Although the school has a water filtration system, the respondents shared diverging views on the provision of safe drinking water by the school. One of the students noted that despite the water filtering equipment, everyone says that the water is not safe to drink. Likewise, another student expressed bringing drinking water from home. A parent agreed that the water provided by the school is not safe, however, the parent was hopeful towards school delivering safe drinking water as a new filtration system is being installed.



*Figure 18 The provision of Safe Drinking Water*



*Figure 17 The installation of new water filtration system*

Besides, the school has constructed sex-specific latrines which contribute in diminishing gender disparities (Adukia, 2016). However, the majority of students commented that the latrines should be managed and cleaned properly. Focusing on the role of the students, a student suggested that the students should also contribute in maintaining the latrine, for instance by buying soaps for the toilets and throwing wastes properly. The student code of conduct states that students are also responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of latrines, including classroom and school premises. Moreover, the proximity of the latrines to the classrooms is troublesome, considering the poor maintenance of latrines.

The striking gap in the facilities of water supply, sanitation and water disposal in schools leads to an immense adversity of disease among young children (Ministry of Education, Nepal, 2016). The School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) 2016-2023 aims for all schools to supply user-friendly functional water and sanitation facilities and hence contribute in offering a safe, healthy and comfortable environment where children can grow, learn and

thrive (ibid). Further, the School Social Workers should be actively involved ensuring the availability, accessibility, and maintenance of toilets, clean water and handwashing.

The respondents were also inquired about the provision of stationery and scholarship to the students. The school receives support from different organizations such as ADRA Nepal, Looniva Child Club, for scholarships and stationery which are provided based upon specified criteria. For instance, a teacher and a student mentioned that scholarship and stationery is specifically provided to students in need; for instance: to students with the weak financial background. One of the students also noted that different stationery items are given as a prize for the winners of competitions organized in school. By contrast, a parent claimed that provision of such services is highly influenced by favoritism; hence, the support is not provided to deserving students mostly. The respondent also stated that favoritism exists in all schools, not only this one.

In the case of scholarship, two students and a parent commented academic achievement and financial background of the student as determinants of scholarships by the organizations. A student who performs well and achieves considerable grade are offered scholarships. Although the education is free, scholarships help to bear the costs of an admission fee, school uniform, stationery and other utilities. Scholarship acts as a motivational source for the students to maintain their performance as well as to do better. Besides, no individual should be deprived of their right to education because of their weak financial condition. In such scenario, the role and importance of scholarship amplify.

## 8.2) School Rules and code of conduct

School rules and code of conduct is one of the prime facets to organize the overall school operation and administer the behavior of the staffs, teachers, students as well as parents. Helping and guiding students to follow school rules is also a good training in collective civic responsibility.

The student code of conduct (Figure 19) in Shree Jana Udaya Secondary School requires all the students to arrive on time in clean and proper school uniform. The students should stay in school throughout the school hours besides lunch time. Also, they should do homework regularly and properly. In the case of leave, students should submit parent approved leave application to the Principal. The students should ask questions and their confusions with teachers or parents. The cleanliness of classroom, latrines and school premises should be maintained and proper use of school property should be ensured. Likewise, the student should show active participation in school decoration as well as a

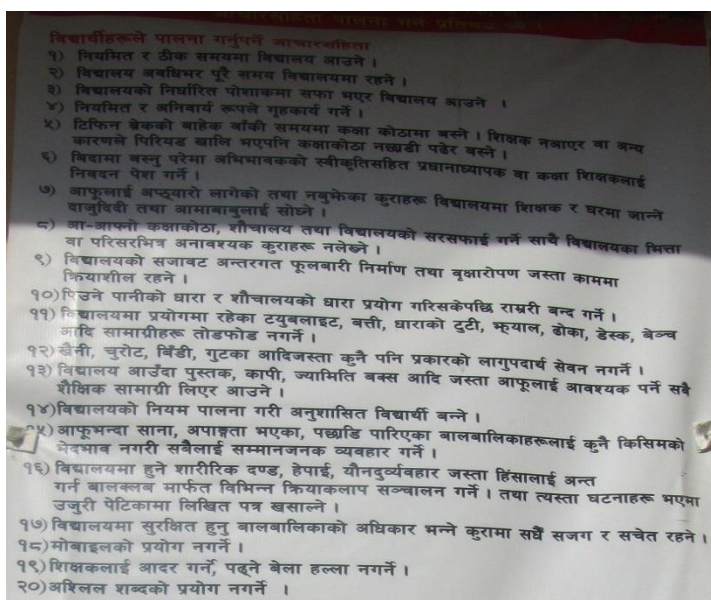


Figure 19 Student Code of Conduct

plantation in the garden. Further, the students should not smoke or take drugs or alcohol or tobacco. The essential educational materials should be brought to school. Besides, the students should follow the school rules and hence be a disciplined student. They must not discriminate juniors, differently abled and students who lag, rather treat everyone equally and in a fair manner.

In addition, the child club should organize programs against physical punishment, oppression, sexual abuse, violence. In case of occurrence of similar incidences, complaints should be submitted in complaint box. The students should also be aware of their right to school safety. Use of mobile and vulgar words is prohibited. Students should respect the teachers and avoid making noise in classroom.

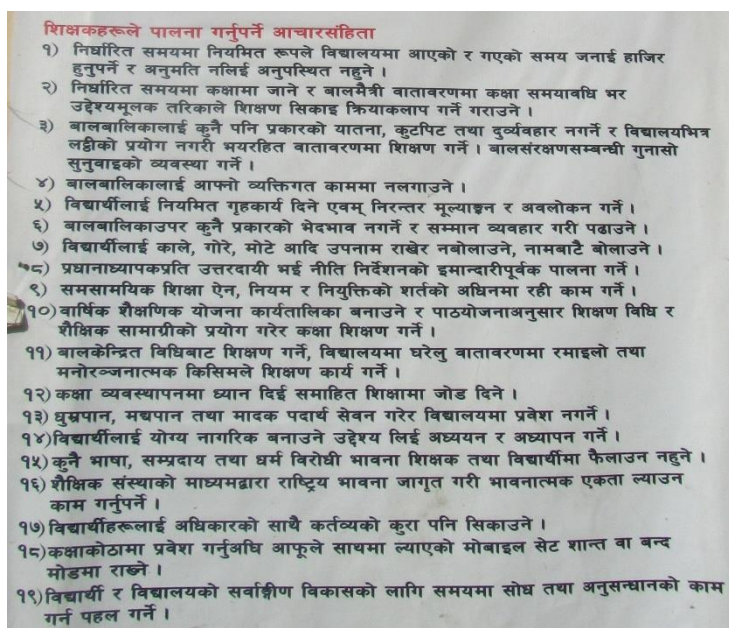


Figure 20 Teacher Code of Conduct

The teacher code of conduct (Figure 20) necessitates teachers to record their time of arrival and departure in the attendance register and to acquire permission should they need to remain absent. The teachers should enter class as per the schedule, uphold child-friendly environment and adapt the teaching learning emphasizing the learning outcomes. Significantly, the teachers must not punish, beat, torture and misbehave with the students.

Also hearing for child protection issues should be arranged. The students should not be involved in teachers' personal works. Besides, the students must be given regular assignments followed up by monitoring and observation. The teachers should not discriminate students in any way and treat everyone equally while teaching. Students should not be given and called with a pet name.

Further, the teachers should be accountable towards Principal, and follow rules with fidelity. They must abide by the updated education acts, policies, formulate annual lesson plans and use curriculum based teaching methods and teaching materials. Teachers are also required to adopt a child-centered approach in teaching, create a homely and fun environment in the classroom and ensure classroom management. Emphasis should be given to integrated education and students should be taught with the aim to thrive them as capable citizens. As applicable to students, teachers are also not allowed to use tobacco, alcohol or smoking before entering the school. They should not initiate or be involved in spreading of the message against any language, religion, culture, develop the feeling of nationalism and unity. While teaching students about their rights, they should also be taught about their duties. Besides, teachers should keep their mobile phone on silent mode or switch it off

during class hours. They should also initiate research and investigation for the holistic development of student and school.

In addition to the formulation of pertinent school rules, updating the school rules are equally important. Taking this into consideration, Pillay and Vijandren (2016) states that the way the administrators and teachers deal with problematic students should also be relevant to the needs and mindsets of the present generation which requisites updating school rules. When the respondents were asked about the updating of the school rules and policies, differing retorts were received. While the majority of the respondents agreed about the timely update of school rules, two of the respondents denied.

A teacher, a parent and four of the students affirmed that the school rules are updated annually. Among them, two students commented that rules are upgraded as per time as same rules are not effective throughout. Also, the teacher mentioned about the meeting and discussion sessions the teachers and school administration have regarding school rules and policies prior to the commencement of new sessions. As a result, some rules and policies will be updated as per the necessity. Likewise, a parent gave an example about the absence of rules for teachers requiring them to arrive on time at school in past. However, once the issue was raised, a rule was formulated necessitating teachers to arrive on time.

Besides, a teacher commented:

*“New rules are introduced but old rules are not updated. The rules are rather limited to documentation, and rarely implemented.” (TR 1)*

In my opinion, the statement of the respondent infers the necessity for the school to ensure the proper implementation as well as monitoring of the school rules. The respondent feels that the school should authenticate itself of effective execution of the former rules to formulate new ones. Until and unless the school ensures proper application, making new rules will not be a constructive solution to maintaining discipline.

Further, most of the respondents responded that the school rules are fair. A teacher justified the fairness of the school rules mentioning that both teachers and principal together formulate the rules and is then approved by SMC. Had the rules been made solely by the school administration, it could have been unfair. Besides, one of the students stated that some rules are fair and some are not. The respondent expressed that in one hand some students are unwilling to be disciplined whereas, in the other hand, the teachers do not show concern towards it. In order to develop and maintain convenient school climate, the School Social Worker, together with SMC and PTA needs to ensure the proper formulation, implementation, and monitoring of the school rules and code of conduct.

One of the teachers shared a distinct view about how the school policies are unfair to the teachers. The respondent expressed that neither the teachers who do good are rewarded, nor the teachers who make mistakes are punished. Even when the teachers want to stand out and do something good, they are not encouraged. Incentives such as increment in salary are offered but is biased. Further, the respondent underlined this scenario to be one of the chief problems in government schools all over the country. A survey report by OECD (2009)-



‘Creating effective teaching and learning environment’ concluded that three out of four teachers feel they lack incentives to improve their teaching quality and hence suggested that the teachers should be offered effective incentives by the education authorities.

The fairness regarding the action taken when someone breaks the school rules was also inquired. All the respondents approved that the school treats justly when someone breaks the rules. One of the teachers commented that school does not have any strict rules. Another teacher mentioned about discipline committee dealing with such cases, as a result, the behavior of the students has been improved as well. Notably, a student expressed about students being unknown to all the school rules. The respondent added that there are times when a school changes the rules and the students are not informed about it or given the reason behind the modification.

### **8.3) Academic Failure and Related School Practices**

Academic performance, as well as academic failure, is often considered to be an individual behavior limited to the early life course (Needham, Crosnoe, & Muller, 2004). Nevertheless, the impact of the academic performance is long-term and affects various life stages on multiple levels (ibid). In the individual level, academic complications might bring out short-term problem behavior and dropout including derailing educational and occupational routes well into adulthood (Crosnoe, 2002; Miller, 1998; Rosenbaum, DeLuca, Miller, & Roy, 1999). Regarding the institutional level, academic struggles can develop disorder among student as well as undermine the general mission of schools (Steinberg et al., 1996; as cited by Needham et al., 2004).

A teacher of Jana Udaya School noted the high number of weak students in the school, increasing the rate of student failure. Considering the situation, it is imperative for the school to employ effective measures to help students improve their academic performance. A teacher mentioned about the arrangement of extra classes for students before the final exams, however, a student stressed that extra classes are available only for grade 10 students. Extra classes comprise of teaching and learning held after the school hours (Selamat, Esa, Salleh, & Baba, 2012). Such classes are tailored for the students for revising lessons taught in school leading to the enhancement of the quality of students’ understanding. The research held by Selamat et al. (2012) concluded that majority of the students expressed high effectiveness of extra classes leading to enhancement of their academic performance.

Another teacher stated focusing on remedial teaching when a student fails in the exam. As per the teacher, through remedial teaching strategy, the student is made to focus on the important questions for exams as passing the examination is considered more important. Considering the literature extracts, the remedial teaching seems to have been misled in this school. The aim of remedial teaching is the provision of learning support to pupils who lag far behind than their counterparts in school performance (Education Bureau - Hongkong, 2007). Teachers can provide learning activities and practical experiences to students based on their abilities and needs, by adapting school curricula and teaching strategies (ibid). In addition, individualized educational programs can also be designed with intensive remedial support to help pupils integrate their basic knowledge in different subjects, master the



learning methods, strengthen their confidence and enhance the effectiveness of learning (ibid).

If the remedial teaching strategy is simply focused on passing the examination, the student will be rather focused on exclusively working hard for getting good grades rather than simultaneously comprehending the knowledge and the concept. A research conducted by Butler and Nisan (1986) inferred that grades emphasized quantitative aspects of learning, depressed creativity, fostered fear of failure, and weakened students' interest. In a consecutive study, Butler (1988) found that the group which got comments precisely focused to students' performance manifested a substantial increase in scores (by almost 30%) on a task. Correspondingly, in an experiment held by Grolnick and Ryan (1987), students who were informed that they will be given grades depending on how well they learned a lesson had more trouble comprehending the main point of the text than did the students who were told that they will not be graded.

Likewise, a teacher expressed the hope for the students to pass examinations with knowledge rather than rote learning. The other teacher shared a similar view and commented about discussing with the students regarding their performance and the ways to achieve more, giving more emphasis on understanding the content and not only passing exams. Further, the respondent stressed that the student will not be promoted solely based on the exam grade, but their overall performance is analyzed.

One of the parents shared a result day milieu where a notice is pinned reading that the result of the students who have failed and have not paid fees are withheld. Such reaction demonstrates that failing an examination is something to be ashamed of. The respondent also mentioned about teacher's suggesting for the student to repeat the class in case of failure. Likewise, the other parent stated that promoting the student in case of failing a subject depends on the marks they achieve. If the mark is extremely low, the students are recommended to repeat the class. However, if the mark is satisfactory and if the teachers have confidence in the student, the student is promoted despite failing the exam.

A parent commented that it is difficult for the parents to see their child fail, hence they request the teachers to promote the child. However, the teachers make the decision very carefully, as they say, it might harm the student and hence try to convince the parents accordingly. Two of the students gave similar views on parents requesting the teachers to promote their child despite the failure and request to provide extra classes.

Grade repetition is an ineffective and possibly harmful intervention and thus the school administrators should rather advocate for "promotion plus" policies based on effective, evidence-based interventions (Jimerson, Pletcher, & Kerr, 2005). Despite academic improvements initially, eventually retained students either do not perform better or often perform worse than similar groups of students who were not retained (ibid). Additionally, grade retention impinges all areas of achievement (e.g., reading, math, and language) and social and emotional adjustment (e.g., peer relationships, self-esteem, problem behaviors, and attendance) (ibid). Grade retention is also considered as one of the most stressful life events by the students (ibid) affecting their adolescence as well, causing emotional distress,

low self-esteem, poor peer relations, smoking, alcohol use, drug abuse, driving or engaging in sexual activity while under the influence, early onset of sexual activity, suicidal intentions, and violent behaviours (Jimerson, Anderson, & Whipple, 2002).

The evidence suggests the detrimental effects of grade repetition. Hence, it is imperative for the school to execute evidence based intervention strategy when tackling the student failure issues aiming to enhance student's performance. The focus should be given to sustained growth and development, and not an immediate interim improvement. The role of School Social Worker will be valuable in planning, implementing and monitoring such measures in collaboration with teachers, parents, and students.

In the case of students, three of them expressed about the teachers encouraging students to work more on the subject they have failed in. The teachers also inspire the students to ask for help from teachers in case of any difficulty. One of the students shared teacher's advising them to consult with good students to study well. The teacher's comment turns the attention of the student to relevant, specific information, stimulate mental elaboration and hence boost performance (Elawar & Corno, 1985). By contrast, a student claimed that the failed students are not really cared for by teachers, are scolded and further said that the school does not make the students attend the exam again. Holding a similar view, another student told that although failed students are asked to study at home, they are ignored at the same time by teachers.

I believe that the students who fail in examination should be given utmost attention by both parents and teachers. Ignorance of failed students will rather worsen the situation, ending in making students feel bad about themselves and further decreasing their academic performance. The parents and teachers play a critical role in inspiring the student and helping them perform better. Further, the students should also be taught to cope with the examination and failing.

The higher number of weak students in the school can also be justified by the lack of parental involvement in the school. Many studies have marked the improved educational outcome of the student due to the active parental participation in school activities and child education. These findings appear consistent across socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial groups (Auerbach & Collier, 2012). In addition to enhancing parental involvement, School Social Workers can be contributory in working with students who are having academic difficulties through progress reports as well as constant monitoring and sharing information between the student and the teacher. Teachers cannot spend individual time with each student who is failing. However, when School Social Worker is informed of a student problem, they can serve as a link to monitor grades and advise students on the ways to improve their situations. (Openshaw, 2008). The School Social Workers may work one-on-one with teachers, families, and children to address individual situations and needs (Mann, 2015).

The reaction of parents, as well as school towards failing in examination hugely, influences the student and their further performance. When the teachers were asked about school's reaction concerning failing, a teacher remarked:

*“The students might fail to give their best in the 2-hours exam. Hence, we take class assessments, analyze their daily activities, behavior, attendance, capacity, homework performance. We analyze overall aspects and decide if the student can attend the final examination.” (TR 1)*

Besides teacher’s reaction, the parent’s reaction towards the failure of students was also questioned. A teacher shared that the parents ask teachers to take extra classes throughout the session, but due to lack of investment in this sector, teachers do not feel encouraged to devote their extra time without investment. Another teacher conveyed parents admitting their lack of effort in helping their child with exams. The parents then proclaim to look after their child’s studies at home and if needed, to give them tuition classes as well. However, the teacher declared that this commitment limits to words and are not implemented at all.

The reports infer the necessity for both teachers and parents to endeavor to enhance the student’s academic achievement and comprehend that their roles and responsibilities are intertwined.

Moreover, one of the teachers expressed about being blamed for the student’s failure.

*“They (the parents) blame the teachers mostly. As the parents are not much aware, they do not understand that they are responsible too. It feels bad during such time.” (TR 3)*

Blaming teachers is one of the common responses from the parents towards their child’s failure. It is substantial for the parents to apprehend that parent and child is as much responsible as the teacher for the academic performance and achievement. The students should be focused and study more; the teachers should make sure their teaching methods are effective and their teaching is understandable to the students whereas the parents should help students with their studies at home and/or build a favorable learning environment at home.

A parent also shared an emotional encounter with the child after finding out the child had failed.

*“I told him that I work hard all day long so that I could afford to educate you, but you failed. He was upset and questioned – How did I fail when all others passed? I then asked him to study well and said that if he performs well the next time, he will be promoted to the following grade. He was disheartened at first, but later I convinced him (to repeat the grade).” (PR 1)*

The majority of the students of this school have a weak economic background which requires themselves or their parents to work hard for the livelihood as well as education. Along with the increased struggle, the parents also hold higher expectation in their child’s school performance. Hence, it disappoints the parents when their child does not perform well. The above mentioned statement also manifests the confusion within the child for failing the exam. It seems that the child expected to get through the exam and is unaware of what made his lag. Such scenario shades light upon the importance of discussion between teachers and students about the areas of improvement of the student.

However, other two students shared that parents scold the students when they fail. But also, concurrently, the parents encourage the students to study more and focus well on studies. Notably, a student told that if the parents are literate, they handle the situation calmly. But, in the case of poorly educated parents, some students tend to lie to them and say they passed the exam.

Amidst all the feedbacks and actions that the parents and the teachers give and execute in response to the student's performance, praising is one of the most significant ones. Praise has been referred to as "positive evaluations made by a person of another's products, performances, or attributes" (Kanouse, Gumpert, & Canavan-Gumpert, 1981; as cited by Lipnevich & Smith, 2008). Basically, praise is believed to have beneficial effects on students' self-esteem, motivation, and performance (Lipnevich & Smith, 2008). In addition, praise can be used in a way to make the students believe that they can succeed which will help augment self- efficacy and thus lead to the greater educational outcome (ibid).

All the respondents agreed that the students are appreciated for their achievement by parents as well as teachers. Two of the teachers commented that the deserving students are offered scholarships as to praise them for their achievement. One of the students pointed out the encouragement from parents to do better through positive reinforcement. The student also stressed that the student should be motivated timely so that they will put more effort. However, lack of concern might discourage the student thus ruining their performance.

A teacher stressed that it is substantial for the school to take a step in tackling the high rate of academic failure among the students.

#### **8.4) Discrimination and Equality Problems**

*"No gender, ethnicity or caste discrimination was found in using school facilities, nor, with one exception, in school attendance." SLRC, 2015*

A study conducted in Nepal by Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC, 2015) reported about the absence of any discrimination in terms of gender, ethnicity, and caste in accessing education and harnessing school facilities. This research has similar finding: as per all the respondents, there is no discrimination based on gender, culture, race, and ethnicity in overall sectors of school, for instance: classroom, playground or bestowing any opportunity. Even the code of conduct forbids discrimination, specifically against juniors, differently abled and students who lag, and encourages to treat everyone equally. Similarly, the students and teachers belonging to different backgrounds have good relationships within and between each other. A student even stated that the school announces holiday in festivals of all ethnicities and cultures. Such gesture reflects acceptance and respect towards all individuals belonging to diverse cultures, religions, and ethnicities and teaches that all individuals are equal and should be treated equally. Two of the teachers and a student also emphasized that negative discrimination does not exist within the school premises and stressed that no one is allowed to negatively discriminate others. In addition, both male and female students, are entitled to equal opportunities.

When students are introduced to the non-discriminatory environment at school, they learn to accept others, respect them and treat them nicely. Such behavior of the student does not

only limit at school, but it will spread to the home and the community as well. Subsequently, their family, acquaintances, as well as the community members, will be influenced by the student's behavior which will manifest in their acts. When the student receives support and encouragement from the school to circulate such behavior, the student will also be capable of raising voice against discriminatory behaviors.

Some of the related principles against discrimination enshrined in Constitution of Nepal (2015) are:

*Article 18 Right to Equality (2): "No discrimination shall be made in the application of general laws on the grounds of religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, physical condition, condition of health, marital status, pregnancy, economic condition, language or region, ideology or on similar other grounds".*

*Article 24 Right against untouchability and discrimination (1): No person shall be subjected to any form of untouchability or discrimination in any private and public places on grounds of his or her origin, caste, tribe, community, profession, occupation or physical condition.*

*Article 24 Right against untouchability and discrimination (4): No discrimination in any form shall be allowed at a workplace with or without making untouchability on the ground of caste.*

*(Government of Nepal, 2015)*

However, the respondents claimed the existence of positive discrimination; scholarships and opportunities are provided to disadvantaged children<sup>10</sup> as an encouragement for them to come to school. A student also shared that even today the girls are given money from school annually, to buy stationery. This trend had commenced in the past because daughters were not sent to school, rather kept at home to do household chores. The monetary incentive was attractive for the family to send their daughters to school and even for the girls to join the school. Putting emphasis on girls and boys being the same at present, the respondent underlined that girls today do not need such support.

Nevertheless, I believe, although the notion of 'boys and girls are equal' is spreading, there still exists gender discrimination in the wider community and there are families who believe it to be unnecessary for the daughters to acquire education. A study conducted by Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (2003) found an increase in girl's enrollment due to incentive programs. Because of the incentives for the girls, parents enroll their daughters in school and girls themselves feel encouraged to participate in education. Therefore, provision of incentive still holds utmost importance.

The provision of scholarship enables the disadvantaged children to access and participate in education. Such opportunities ease the burden on the family and encourage the family to send their children to school, which otherwise they would not have. In the case of Dalits<sup>11</sup>,

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<sup>10</sup> In this report, disadvantaged children refer to Dalits - traditionally the most disadvantaged caste, indigenous groups and students who experience financial hardship

<sup>11</sup> The word "Dalit" means "the oppressed and members of this group gave themselves the name in the 1930s. They are also known as "Untouchables," and are members of the lowest social status group in the

they are behind education sector in comparison to other caste groups in Nepal; their rate of enrollment is lower and drop out is higher (Bishwakarma, 2011). Dalits are excluded from and discriminated in education sectors basically because of weak financial background, caste-based discrimination, geographical problem, limited awareness level among Dalit parents, lack of Dalit representation, prejudiced state mechanism and unemployment (ibid). Therefore, the provision of incentive in the long-term contributes in the promotion of Dalits' social and economic progress and hence the development of the Dalit community. From the school social work viewpoint, the positive discrimination has enhanced the availability and accessibility of education to disadvantaged children.

In addition, the respondents were also inquired if both male and female teachers are given an equal share of roles and responsibilities. Teachers, parents and students, all responded contrarily. A teacher told that when it is about the teacher, the focus is not given to the male or female teacher, the teacher is regarded as a whole and thus given equal roles and responsibilities. By contrast, another teacher commented that when it is about organizing sports, male teachers are given responsibilities. A student shared a similar view and told that female teachers do not lead football competitions because they do not know all the rules of football.

Notably, a teacher expressed that as female teachers have more responsibility at home, they are not much active in school. That is the reason why the female teachers back out when it is about sports events. Even if the school bestows the roles and responsibilities, the female teachers themselves do not want to take it. In contrary, a parent remarked that female teachers are more active than their male counterparts. During interviews, I also realized that the respondents feel pleased to have more female ratio than male, amongst the students as well as teachers.

However, I feel that even the female teachers should be involved in managing the sports events because it imparts the message that sport is gender-neutral and is important for both boys and girls. When only male teachers are engaged in sports events, it highlights the masculine approach thus segregating specific sports for boys and others for girls which do not denote equality.

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Hindu caste system, which includes the four primary castes of Brahmins (priests), Kshatriya (warriors and princes), Vaisya (farmers and artisans) and Shudra (tenant farmers or servants). (Szczepanski, 2017)

## 9) School Achievements and School Improvement Suggestions as provided by the respondents

The respondents were asked to mention the progress that the school has achieved so far and the suggestions for further refinement. Table 1 presents the retorts received from the respondents in the respective matters.

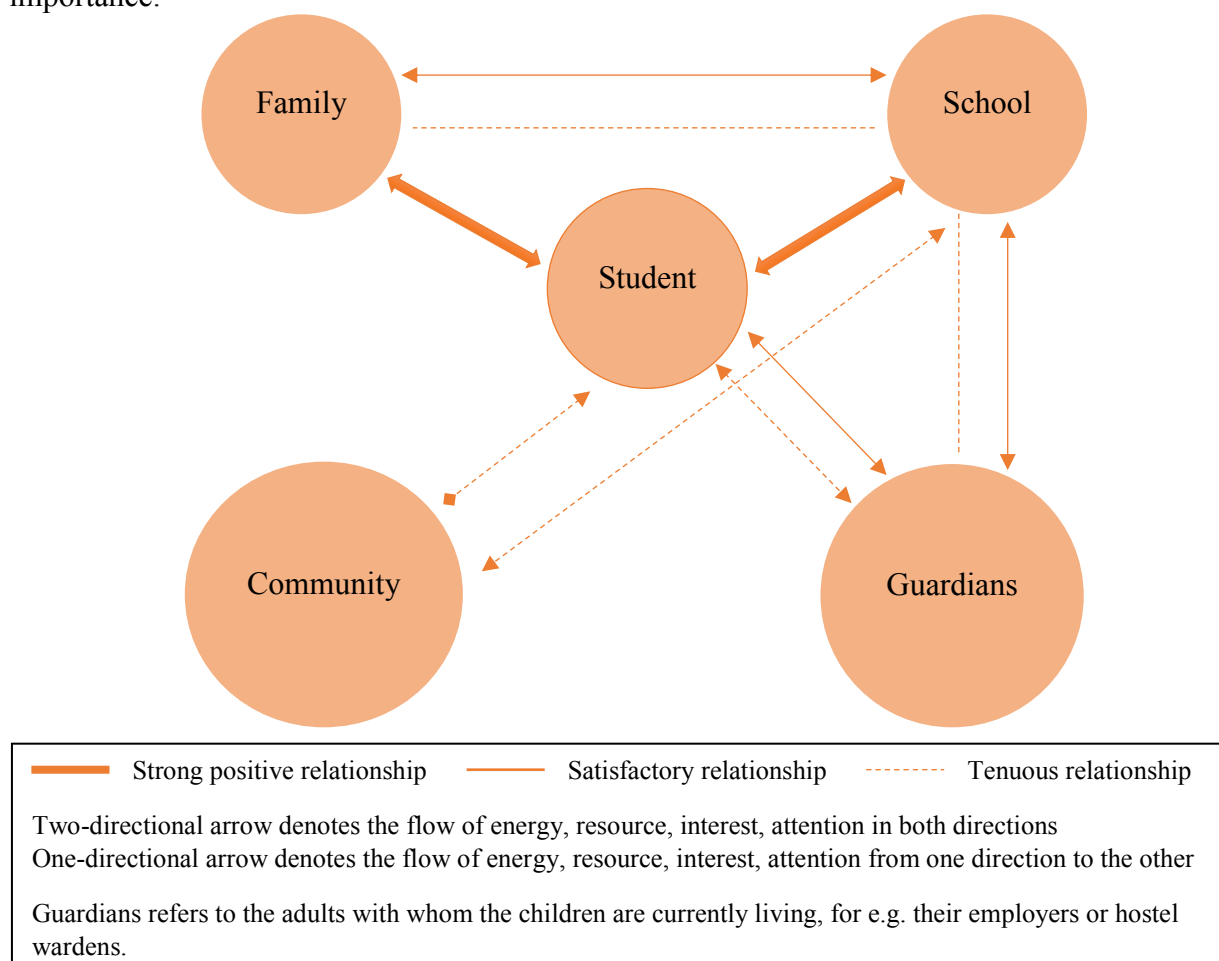
*Table 1 School Achievements and School Improvement Suggestions as provided by the respondents*

School Achievements	School Improvement Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Discipline is maintained</li> <li>✓ Limited number of students facilitating one-on-one student-teacher interaction</li> <li>✓ Emphasis on ECA</li> <li>✓ School is more organized - specifically in terms of teachers following their class schedules strictly and the students staying within the school premises throughout the school hours</li> <li>✓ Admission open to everyone</li> <li>✓ Teachers give their best in fulfilling their teaching responsibility</li> <li>✓ Core-subject teachers</li> <li>✓ Regular monitoring of student's performance through examination</li> <li>✓ Suggestions provided to parents during school visits</li> <li>✓ Information dissemination to all parents about school meetings</li> <li>✓ Information on health disseminated frequently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parental involvement in school activities should be enhanced</li> <li>➤ Students, parents, as well as school staffs, should be equally involved in improving the school</li> <li>➤ Curriculum should be reviewed</li> <li>➤ Quality of education should be improved</li> <li>➤ ICT in the curriculum must be promoted</li> <li>➤ Teachers should widen their responsibilities</li> <li>➤ Teachers should be given incentives as encouragement</li> <li>➤ Mechanism of teacher monitoring and giving feedback to the teachers should be developed</li> <li>➤ School management should harness the teacher's skills</li> <li>➤ Equality between teachers and students should be maintained</li> <li>➤ Good relationship between the teachers must be established</li> <li>➤ School should take and implement suggestions from parents</li> <li>➤ Parents should be invited compulsorily</li> <li>➤ Parent-teacher interaction should be increased</li> <li>➤ Focus must be given on positive features of students when they fail an exam</li> <li>➤ Extra classes should not limit to grade 10</li> <li>➤ Emphasis on practical as well as remedial classes</li> <li>➤ All information should be made transparent by the school administration</li> <li>➤ Students should be averted from involving in any delinquent acts</li> <li>➤ More emphasis should be on cleanliness of the students</li> <li>➤ Provision of Safe Drinking Water should be ensured</li> <li>➤ Latrines should be managed</li> <li>➤ Proper mechanism to discipline students must be developed</li> <li>➤ Computer and science laboratories should be equipped adequately</li> <li>➤ School environment where all the school staffs feel as a family should be created</li> <li>➤ Positive and negative reinforcement should be formulated without any biases</li> <li>➤ A school environment where both students and teachers are free to demonstrate their skills must be formulated</li> <li>➤ A school canteen should be established</li> </ul>

## 10) Dimensions of School Social Work in the everyday life of the school without School Social Workers

Under the key constraint: ‘home-school-community linkage’, the features of School Social Worker are missing to a larger extent. However, regarding the key constraints- ‘ethical guidelines and educational policy’ and ‘education rights and advocacy’, more of the school missions and activities are in line with the School Social Worker’s functions. Considering the challenges of the schools including few aspects representing the features of school social work, the role of School Social Worker is deemed effective and necessary.

Establishing, maintaining and fortifying the home school community linkage is one of the major responsibilities of School Social Worker. As the liaison is valuable for students – in terms of their enhanced and effective performance, achievement, behaviour, and development; for school – in terms of better school environment, policies, programs, and opportunities; for parents – in terms of their active involvement in their child’s education and being instrumental in school decision-making; and for community – in terms of having well-educated citizens contributing to the community development, it is of utmost importance.



*Figure 21 Eco-map of the Home School Community linkage in Jana Udaya*

The eco-map (Figure 21) represents the relation between the home school community in Jana Udaya School. The connection lines denote the form of relationship whereas the arrows signify the flow of energy and/or resource and/or interest and/or attention.



As demonstrated in the eco-map, the students of the school have strong relationships with the school and family; the two-directional arrow represents that students and family, and students and school influence and contribute to each other as well as provide support and communicate well. It was noticed that the students are even friendly with the principal, which is uncommon in the context of Nepal. Nevertheless, the students do not feel comfortable with strict teachers.

The relation of school with the family varies. The school maintains a satisfactory relationship with some families – significantly the PTA board members and families who visit the school often whereas the relation with others is tenuous. In the case of former families, there is a two-directional arrow as family invests energy for the school and receives support from the school; but, the degree of dedication and responsibility is moderate. Concerning other families, there lacks communication, support, and commitment to the families and the school.

The respondents conveyed that the healthy relationship between the parents and the teachers makes the students concerned and aware of their actions both in school and at home. Such relationship also motivates the students to achieve more. In the case of a weak connection between home and school, the students are found to be irresponsible.

Although the school invites the parents for meetings to gather suggestions, this initiation has not been advantageous mainly because most of the parents are busy enough to attend the meetings, and for the parents who participate and provide suggestions, the school does not address and implement most of those suggestions. Further, as most of the parents are daily-wage earners and are illiterate, school staffs are uncertain about the parent's ability in being instrumental to the school and their child's education. The apprehension of the school on the significance in forming and maintaining a connection with the parents for improving child's overall performance and development, and enhancing school effectiveness is scant. Notwithstanding, the respondents agree that the school has created a welcoming environment for the parents to visit the school to discourse over their child's issues, progress, and other concerns.

Likewise, the majority of the parents are unaware of the significance in establishing and maintaining the home school linkage including their role in augmenting their child's achievement and learning. As a result, these parents do not devote time in attending school meetings, events, activities, and overall in their child's education. Additionally, as in general context, there are parents in this school who put the responsibility of educating the child solely upon the school. Such mindset within the parents has hindered their involvement in school activities and their child's education.

As most of the students are domestic laborers, they live with their guardians. The school, as well as students, has a satisfactory relationship with the guardians who are concerned about the students (Figure 21, p. 97). The school provides support and encouragement, the students work for them and in return, such guardians expend their time for school and the child's education. In respect to other guardians who are uninterested towards the students, the school, as well as students, has a tenuous relationship with them and there is the absence of

commitment within such guardians and the school. However, the arrow between students and uninterested guardians is two-directional because the students work for the guardians and in return, the guardians support their livelihood.

Besides, the major challenge in establishing school-community partnership is a lack of local students in the school. As a result, the community is indifferent towards the school hence the failure to develop a collegial relation. The two-directional arrow between school and community (Figure 21, p. 97) specifically represents the flow of resources; the school harnesses the community ground as the playground and the school building is available for community use. Students are directly benefited from getting to use community ground. Further, the contribution of the community organizations has been observed primarily in the health and financial sector. However, the students have not been instrumental to the community and neither has community and school been advantageous for one another. The focus on school-community collaboration in forming and executing better programs, opportunities and learning for students leading to effective school and community development is deficient.

Jana Udaya school gathers concepts and ideas chiefly from SMC and moderately from board members of PTA in developing the school plans, programs, rules, curriculum and similar important matters. SMC has chiefly been supportive in conducting daily school activities building infrastructures, networking with organizations, and gathering financial sources. The contribution of PTA has been inclined towards improvising teaching-learning environment and maintaining the discipline in school. Also, both SMC and PTA has helped in problem-solving. Moreover, getting involved in PTA have empowered its board members; it has enabled the parents to share their thoughts with the school and has made them realize their valuable role in their children's education. However, it is observed that the involvement and the contribution have been limited to the SMC and PTA board members only. Notably, the significant role of SMC and PTA in establishing, maintaining and reinforcing home school community linkage, however, seems to remain unfulfilled.

Based on the interviews, I determine that the principal objective of the school has been to provide education to the children; simultaneously emphasizing the school activities for the holistic growth and development of the student is inadequate. There is a gap in the understanding among teachers and parents that their roles towards achieving better student outcomes and developing effective school are interlinked. Also, there is limited efforts from the school to enhance parental and community involvement for enriched student achievement and school betterment. At this point, the need of School Social Worker is recognized, as they focus on the holistic development of the children in collaboration with school, family, and community.

A study by Blitz et al (2013) is grounded in key social work concepts that provide an approach for parental engagement, specifically in a poor, rural school district. The conceptual framework constitutes of three core components: "(a) strengths-based, to support and enhance the parent's existing capacity; (b) trauma-informed, to understand and respond to the physiological and psychosocial impact of toxic stress; and (c) systems-focused, to

facilitate change within the school system to make it responsive to the families' needs and strengths". (Blitz, Kida, Gresham, & Bronstein, 2013).

Schools, parents as well as community need to work from a common agenda to support student achievement, which requires meaningful investment from all three partners. Under this circumstance, the School Social Worker can play the role of mediator between the partners and help ease conflicting interests and stimulate progress towards common goals. As some of the respondents mentioned about school sidelining and/or ignoring the suggestions from parents, School Social Workers can ensure that school listens to and validates the beliefs, values, and practices of parents (Joseph-Goldfarb, 2014). Simultaneously, it is vital to ensure that parents are empowered to be effective advocates for their child's education (ibid), considering the doubt among the teachers as well as parents themselves about their contribution towards school and child's education, in this research.

The respondents of the study conducted by Joseph-Goldfarb (2014) commented that the school should focus on efforts to invite and involve all parents to take planning and leadership roles and to develop program and implement it; not just target the parents who show up and have positive associations with school, but also the parents who feel ambivalent about or excluded from school. The study further mentions that the role of School Social Workers is situated on the intersection between school and home, where they represent the values of both school and home and find ways to mediate tensions in case the values conflict.

Further, the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project was developed in California with the purpose to engage families outside of the school buildings and to establish trust (Kalb, 2013; as cited by Joseph-Goldfarb, 2014). As the teachers of this school are demoralized to devote additional time, School Social Workers can take up the role of visitors. The school visitors are trained to listen more than talk, they inquire with parents about their expectations from children, build joint goals for education, provide parents with tools to monitor and assess educational progress, gather feedback on how schools are meeting student and family needs and learn about values and practices that reflect parent's expectations for their children's education (Matthews, 2014; Kalb, 2013; Smith, 2013).

Carreón, Drake & Barton (2005) argue that the concept of parent involvement, significantly the economically and culturally marginalized families, must not be confined to formal school spaces, nor be school-centered, but rather it should be comprehended as a process that parents are actively part of formulating. Likewise, the School Social Workers- the respondents of a study conducted by Joseph-Goldfarb (2014) suggested that the needs of students and families can be better met by expanding the notion of school beyond the confines of the building to include the community within which a school is located. The programs outside the school building reflect that education is a responsibility best shared by the whole community.

Social workers are the best professionals to facilitate parent involvement efforts as they are trained to take a strengths-based, ecological, systems focused perspective. They play a unique role in establishing liaison between families, schools, the broader community, and

macro level policy and can, therefore, act as the bridge between institutions and individuals. (Joseph-Goldfarb, 2014).

Further, one of the major facets of school social work practice is ensuring that the school offers safe and supportive school environment and that the students feel safe at school. The respondents, specifically students expressed feeling safe to attend school following the earthquake of April 2015 and being aware of their actions when an earthquake occurs. This is because the school has 'Earthquake Evacuation Plan', and the staffs and students have participated in earthquake related programs by NSET and first-aid is available and accessible. Further, students commented that having a positive relationship with other students and teachers makes them feel secure. A female student shared that she feels safe because females are preferred over males and girls are looked after when going through menstrual pain.

However, the existence of corporal punishment, incidences of drug abuse and bullying highlights risks in the school. All respondents agreed that corporal punishment is still used as a discipline technique in the school. The students are made to stand outside the class, forced to hold their ears and sit up and down continuously, threatened to be expelled and are also beaten. The act of punishment is entrenched in Nepalese society which is common within home environment as well. But, two of the teachers mentioned that the concept of child-friendly environment and students commented that notion of 'school as a peace zone' and strict child-related laws has helped diminishing corporal punishment. Few of the students expressed that there are teachers who rather give suggestions and advice.

However, all the teachers told that lack of punishment and significantly the concept of 'child-friendly schools' has made the students less afraid of the teachers and thus is spoiling them. Generally, the teachers and school administrators have the perspective that the students should be threatened and be fearful of the teachers. Besides students, teachers, as well as parents, opined that punishment should be given. Aftermath punishment, some of the students have had improved their behavior, however, the repercussions it holds are much more intense. Parents and students mentioned that punishment negatively affects the students, significantly psychologically. Hence, students underlined the importance to seek alternatives to punishment.

Costin (1978) stated that the use of corporal punishment in schools is "antithetical to the values of the social work profession [and that] School Social Workers should refuse to condone this practice and should inform themselves and their colleagues of the legal and moral rights of students" (as cited by Dupper & Dingus, 2008). Anand (2014) suggests holistic social work interventions to reduce the incidences of corporal punishment. Social workers in school can raise awareness among school teachers, administrators, parents and community members about the harmful physical and psychological effects of corporal punishment. Simultaneously, they can be taught about the positive discipline models, in addition to developing the skills of teachers as well as parents concerning effective strategies to inculcate order and discipline among children. Parents and teachers can be trained on the use of differential reinforcement techniques, which effectively integrates the application of

positive and negative reinforcements to stimulate pro-social behavior and reduce the maladaptive ones. (Anand, 2014)

Social skills training for students should be emphasized, which teaches students about making good choices including skills such as empathy, impulse control, altruism, communication skills and personality development. Subsequently, in coordination with the school administration, the School Social Workers can publicly applaud to honor the students who display positive values such as helpful behavior towards peers, confidence, respect, responsibility, caring and honesty. (Anand, 2014). Additionally, the teachers and parents should be encouraged to employ proactive discipline strategies which comprise of early intervention, remaining calm, and use a variety of discipline strategies to teach students appropriate behavior and effective emotion regulation (Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, 2016).

Moreover, as corporal punishment is entrenched within the teachers, administrators, and parents, a system for continuous monitoring of disciplining mechanism should be developed and its effective implementation should be ensured. Also, along with school management, the School Social Workers should develop stern policies to deal with any reported incident of corporal punishments. In the community, School Social Workers can lead focus group discussions, workshops and seminars on the issue (Anand, 2014), for which volunteers both from schools and communities can be mobilized as well. School Social Workers can also initiate media campaigns with the aim to enable building a child-friendly and sensitive approach among people towards dealing with children (ibid). The platform can also be used to sensitize people about the harmful impact of corporal punishment on the self-esteem, confidence, emotions, and behavior of children (ibid).

Drug abuse has been a burning problem in the community which has also affected the students of Jana Udaya School. Because of the efforts of the school, parents and the Police department, the number of drug abuse cases in school has decreased. However, the efforts of the school in preventing and eradicating drug abuse solely within the school are ineffective because the issue is prevalent in the community as well. Hence, school and community should put collaborative efforts to eradicate drug abuse cases.

In order to deal with drug abuse, one of the initial tasks of a School Social Worker is to assess the drug abuse problems, as NASW states that social worker will work with the clients to "complete a comprehensive assessment toward the development of a service plan for recommended placement into an appropriate treatment program" (Miller A. ). School Social Workers use a strengths-based approach with clients, for instance, harm reduction technique which acknowledges client self-determination and readiness for change. School Social Workers seek out both personal as well as environmental resources and reserves from the clients and then harnesses the strengths to move clients forward (Future of Palm Beach). Moreover, life skills training, a universal approach to prevention, includes teaching students to resist social influences to smoke, drink or use drugs; this program is designed with the aim to enhance general personal and social skills. The stress is given to knowledge and skills needed by youth to cope with the developmental influences during adolescence, including skills as problem-solving, decision-making, self-awareness, effective communication,

assertiveness, and stress reduction (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2005).

The inclusion of parents and the larger community is equally significant and effective. School Social Worker can implement Project Northland, a prevention approach which includes classroom sessions focused on social resistance skills training, homework assignments with parent involvement, development of peer-directed, drug-free activities outside of school, informational material to be taken home, newsletters to parents, and community organization to form task forces for the development of policies related to drug abuse. Examples of these types of activities include (1) student interviews with diverse community members to accumulate information for formulation of model alcohol policies, (2) presentation of the policies in simulated community meetings, and (3) student-produced anti-alcohol plays performed to teachers, parents, and community members. (ibid)

Moreover, the School Social Workers can connect the students who abuse drugs with treatment centers, review progress frequently and establish support systems. Although the student might be actively pursuing treatment for addiction, they may struggle to find acceptance in the home, school and community environment, increasing the chances of relapse. The stigma linked with drug abuse establishes barriers to effective access, treatment, and acceptance. (Future of Palm Beach). The teachers, school staffs, parents and even the community members should be encouraged to develop a support system, to provide a positive environment and boost up the student's confidence and self-esteem level.

Regarding bullying, I feel that teachers, school staffs, parents as well as students are oblivious to the concept of bullying and the demarcation between teasing and bullying. Mixed views were gathered from the respondents; some of them told that bullying does not exist in this school, others remarked the presence of bullying while most respondents told that it is rather teasing than bullying. Two of the teachers concluded that bullying is absent in the school stating that the students do not bully each other in front of the teachers. Another teacher revealed the presence of bullying and added that it is mostly done by powerful students. However, the respondent said that the level of bullying has reduced.

A parent told that when studying in the same school, it is common for the students to tease one another. However, the parent added that even if it is teasing, it has led to repercussions, hence it should be controlled. This reflects that the act is bullying and is not simply teasing which is playful and relatively friendly. Also, discomfort, especially among the girls was expressed by the parent in sharing the incidences of being bullied. I also observed the absence of a mechanism to identify the actions of students as bullying; bullying being a covert activity, monitoring is critical. Also, bullying related programs has not been conducted by the school.

When teachers find out about cases of bullying, they investigate the incident. Depending on the intensity of the incident, bullies are usually given advice to improve their behavior, but also scolded, beaten, warned to be expelled whereas the victims are typically blamed for. Parents are informed only when the action is repetitive. A student also mentioned about

cases of Student Bullying of Teachers (SBT), in which the teachers are bullied by the students for reasons such as inadequate teaching ability, low qualification.

As for the ways to stop bullying, respondents suggested that the bully and the victim should both be counselled, awareness should be raised among students, school staffs, as well as parents, punishment against bullying should be formulated and its effective implementation should be monitored, and parents and the teachers should play vital role in establishing favorable home and school environment against bullying.

School Social Workers can work with students, teachers, school administrators and the community to prevent bullying in school and can also support the teachers and the school staffs to intervene when bullying occurs. They can assist in implementing anti-bullying programs; assisting victims, bully and individuals present in a bullying incident, by providing counseling services, and teaching skills to students relating to their social contexts (Staples, 2016). The concrete reason that bullying in schools matters is that bullying interrupts the social and emotional health of students, which in return interrupts the student's ability to be able to learn (Minnesota Department of Education & Minnesota School of Social Workers Association, 2007).

At the micro level, School Social Workers perform a needs assessment on students for bullying prevention. The assessment supports school staff in comprehending things that they did not understand before, like the frequency and results of bullying within their school. School Social Workers advocate for students and/or their families and provide assistance to the victim as well as to the bully and witnesses. (Staples, 2016)

At the mezzo level, School Social Workers provide assistance in organizing training for school staff and administration or work with the administration about a bullying prevention program (Staples, 2016). School Social Workers conduct classroom presentations regarding bullying prevention focusing on healthy ways to express emotions, replacement behaviors of bullying as well as discussing with students about the prevention techniques (ibid). As most of the respondents are perplexed between the concept of bullying and teasing, effective awareness programs highlighting the clear notion of bullying and teasing should be conducted. Development of monitoring mechanism along with a strong policy to deal with bullying acts, in collaboration with school administration is also essential. Finally, at the macro level, School Social Workers can be the voice, and lobby for bullying policies and laws changes (ibid).

Besides, emphasizing theoretical knowledge, following outdated curriculum, having inadequate teaching-learning materials, employing lecture method excessively, prioritizing examination grades, lack of teaching-learning evaluation reflects incompetent teaching-learning environment at the school. Encouraging students to share their ideas, thoughts, opinions, obeying teachers, exerting positive discipline, adopting diverse teaching methods, teaching with passion and enthusiasm, improving classroom infrastructure are the suggestions provided by the respondents to ameliorate teaching-learning environment.

The classrooms of the school also hinder the effective teaching-learning environment. The seating arrangement is traditional preventing the student-teacher interaction and active

student participation. In addition, closely located classrooms, the benches in the classroom, proximity to the latrines impinges the learning environment. Nevertheless, the majority of classrooms have proper lighting and the walls are filled with artworks from the students which manifest their potential, capacity and develops the sense of ownership.

In addition, lack of implementation of learning from training that the teachers attend delays the upgrade of teaching-learning environment. A teacher emphasized about the lack of incentive to the teacher as a problem in government school all over the country. Teachers are not given rewards and incentives; thus, the teachers conveyed that they do not feel encouraged to augment their performance and put extra efforts.

Furthermore, the educational facilities in the school are inadequate and unutilized, specifically: school library, computer lab, and science lab. The library was affected by the earthquake in 2015 and has remained unmanaged since then. Additionally, as per the teachers, the library deficits useful books and does not have a librarian. Insufficiency and dysfunctionality of the equipment in science and computer laboratories were also underlined by the teachers and the students.

In addition to educational facilities, the provision of water and sanitation facilities is questionable in Jana Udaya School. Despite having the water filtration system, due to lack of maintenance, safe drinking water is not supplied. However, as new filtration system is being installed, the respondents expect the provision of safe drinking water. Besides, although the school has sex-specific latrines, it is not clean and managed. The lack of management of such facilities has affected the quality of education as well as hindered school effectiveness. In my point of view, the unavailability of the educational facilities has also been a factor discouraging the community members from admitting their child in this school. In the general context in Nepal, the parents select schools based on availability educational facilities. The scarcity of such facilities implies that provision of education from a holistic level is missing.

Additionally, the students are segregated into different classroom sections based on tracking; the students who perform better are in one section whereas those who are academically weak are in other section. Such measure has developed the feeling of incompetence among the students. Hence, the School Social Worker can support the school to adopt constructive initiatives to support the students who are average or below average.

School Social Workers can support the teachers in designing relevant and interactive teaching methods, teaching learning materials as well as classroom environment. They can influence the focus of school towards practical knowledge. After-school programs focusing on promoting social and cognitive competence of students should be designed and organized. In collaboration with SMC and PTA, School Social Workers should formulate a mechanism to monitor the teaching-learning process at the school and ensure its effective implication.

Likewise, School Social Workers should promote the appreciation of the teachers through incentives which highly influences their work commitment and performance. The focus should also be given to the operation of the school library, computer and science lab. In this



situation, the School Social Worker can get involved in grant-writing to ensure adequate books in the library and sufficient and functional equipment in laboratories. The support from the community can also be sought. Additionally, the School Social Worker should ensure proper and safe water and sanitation facilities; students, teachers as well as parents can be mobilized.

Concerning problem-solving, the students initially try to solve the problem on their own, and they approach teachers and parents only when they fail to get hold of it. The problems that the students face at school are generally dealt by the class teachers. Depending on the nature and intensity of the problem, principal and parents are consulted. The students expressed that they are comfortable and are encouraged in sharing the problems with teachers, but not the problems they face at home. If the students feel awkward sharing problems in person, the school has complaint box in which the students can drop a note regarding their problems or any other issues. The teachers, in return, give suggestions and advice. However, the students share problems faced at home as well as in school with their families including friends.

Parents noted that the teachers share problems related to their child's performance including their irregularity. In addition, the parents share about the behavioral problems of their children with the teachers; however, improvements are not achieved in all such cases. Two of the students, who do not live with their parents, indicated that they mostly share their problems with friends only whereas the academic problems with teachers. It manifests that in absence of adult figure, the students seek support mostly from their friends, hence healthy relation with friends is vital. Also, it unveils the necessity of positive relationships between students and teachers, for teachers to provide guidance, support, care and encouragement to the students.

A student highlighted the significance of school and parents working together to solve the problems; whereas a parent underlined the necessity to share the problem with the principal to get the problem solved. Another parent commented that although school listens to the problem, they do not intervene. A teacher remarked that teachers are too busy to get indulged in student's problems. Significantly, as the majority of the student does not live with their parents, teachers should play the vital role of an adult figure in the student's life providing support and protection. SMC and PTA have also been instrumental in solving the problems of the students. A student noted that the school generally solves the problems related to school and the one which is within their capacity. However, community organizations are not approached for problem-solving.

When the question related to counselors and psychologists was raised, a student opined that many students of this school have mental disorders significantly because most of the students do not live with their parents. An organization, CWISH has played a major role in counseling students. However, the teachers seem to be oblivious to the possibility of mental disturbances among the students and the importance of their involvement in helping the students. Only a student and two teachers underlined the significance of consultation with counselors and psychologists to tackle mental issues of the students.

Concerning mental health issues, the School Social Worker should deliver classroom instruction that enhances awareness of mental health; promotes healthy behaviors; and reduces the stigma associated with mental health issues. School Social Workers should consult and collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents and paraprofessionals to organize functional behavioral assessments, recognize reasonable behavioral goals, outline positive behavioral strategies, and determine methods for monitoring progress (Frey & George-Nichols, 2003). They should also provide responsive services including internal and external referral procedures, counseling or crisis intervention focused on mental health (SSWAA). It is significant to educate teachers, administrators, parents, guardians and community members about the mental health concerns of students, in addition to the role environmental factors play in causing or exacerbating mental health issues (ibid).

In the case of academic problems, according to teachers, students do not initiate in asking questions despite the encouragement to inquire; however, students feel that they approach teachers in case of any confusions. I feel that the interactive classroom environment is highly influenced by the teaching methods that the teachers employ. As lecture method is the most used teaching method in this school, student participation is minimal. Besides, there are students who hide their problems with the fear that they would appear weak. Hence, teachers should establish participatory classroom environment and convey that asking questions is rather helpful than disgracing. Because of the higher number of weak students, a teacher stressed on the need of school endeavor to address the academic struggles of weak students.

One of the major functions of School Social Workers is to maintain a standard school quality and educational outcomes while addressing structural inequalities and futile school processes. The school environment is among the many components which should be appropriate and motivating to impart quality education. In Jana Udaya School, the school environment is appropriate considering that every student can participate in all the school activities, for instance, art competition, quiz competition, debate competition, sports competition, cultural programs, and festival celebrations. Such activities are conducted on a regular basis.

The school has an active child-club which organizes various school activities. The involvement in child club has enhanced the growth and development of the members in many ways. They get the opportunity to attend training; in return, they transfer the knowledge they gain to the students at the school. Child club is also a medium for the students to take part in the decision-making of school. The members of child club are included timely in the meeting of school administration and their views and ideas are collected in certain matters.

Moreover, the school is free from discrimination in the form of gender, caste, race, sex, ethnicity, and religion; and promotes gender equality. Every student is entitled to all school facilities, activities, and opportunities. In addition, the respondents claimed about positive discrimination for the disadvantaged children in the form of scholarship and stationery. The school receives support from various organizations such as ADRA Nepal, Looniva Child Club which enables the school to offer scholarships to the disadvantaged students as well as to student with excellent academic achievement. The scholarships have been a motivational

source for the students and have made education accessible to the disadvantaged students. By contrast, a parent stated that provision of scholarships is highly influenced by favoritism, as a result, deserving students are omitted mostly. The parent claimed that such practice is common in all schools.

Apart from such facilities, the school has formulated a code of conduct for students as well as teachers indicating rules, responsibilities, and practices. All students are treated fairly when breaking the rules, which is regulated by the discipline committee. The majority of the respondents indicated that the school rules are updated annually through meeting and discussion session among the teachers and school administration. However, a teacher argued that the rules are confined to the documents and are seldom enforced.

Among many academic problems, the chief ones existing in Jana Udaya School is student failure and rote learning. When a student fails a subject, the school conducts extra classes and usually employ remedial teaching strategy and grade repetition. Extra class is an effective measure however grade repetition and remedial teaching strategy focused on examination question and achieving higher marks is unproductive.

Initially, failed students are generally scolded by teachers and parents and are ignored as told by one of the students. However, they are later encouraged by teachers and parents. Parents usually blame teachers for the student failure. Nevertheless, the students who perform well are appreciated by teachers as well as parents. Besides, students focus more on rote learning to get through the exams than gaining knowledge and understanding the content which is also the result of school and parents putting more emphasis on performing well in the examination and achieving higher marks. It is important for the teacher to collaborate with the student and the parents, and develop a plan together, identifying specific ways for student improvement.

In addition to fortifying the implication of interactive teaching methods and classroom environment, School Social Worker should collaborate with teachers to implement early educational needs identification procedures to promote cognitive and social competence. It is vital to determine learning disabilities and learning problems among the students and design interventions to address it including monitoring mechanisms. Age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instructional strategies to accelerate progress in the classroom should be designed. The School Social Worker should stimulate parental involvement to maintain frequent contact with teachers, supervise homework and encourage student involvement in school activities that promote learning. In the case of parents/guardians who are busy or are disconnected with school, School Social Worker can make home visits to update them about the child's progress and setbacks.

School Social Workers consult with teachers and advocate for students for dealing with learning or other school-related difficulties. They have specialist knowledge for working with children, young people and families, and skills for school-specific activities incorporating preventive education for personal safety, mental health, dealing with difficult emotions, building friendships and coping with peer and sub-cultural pressures. Further, they support teachers in the analysis of student with learning and behaviors difficulties and

make recommendations for teaching, learning and curriculum modification, individualized support, behavior management, student groupings and classroom environment. (Joseph-Goldfarb, 2014)

The chart (Figure 22, p. 110) signifies the rationale for the School Social Worker considering the problems existent in the school thereby recommending the effective school social work intervention strategies. Also, the chart presents opportunities available in the school which facilitates the implementation of the strategies. Whereas the challenges for the school social work practices is also specified. The implication of school social work interventions in collaboration with the school administration, teachers, parents as well as community members will lead to conducive school environment ensuring the best interest of the child.

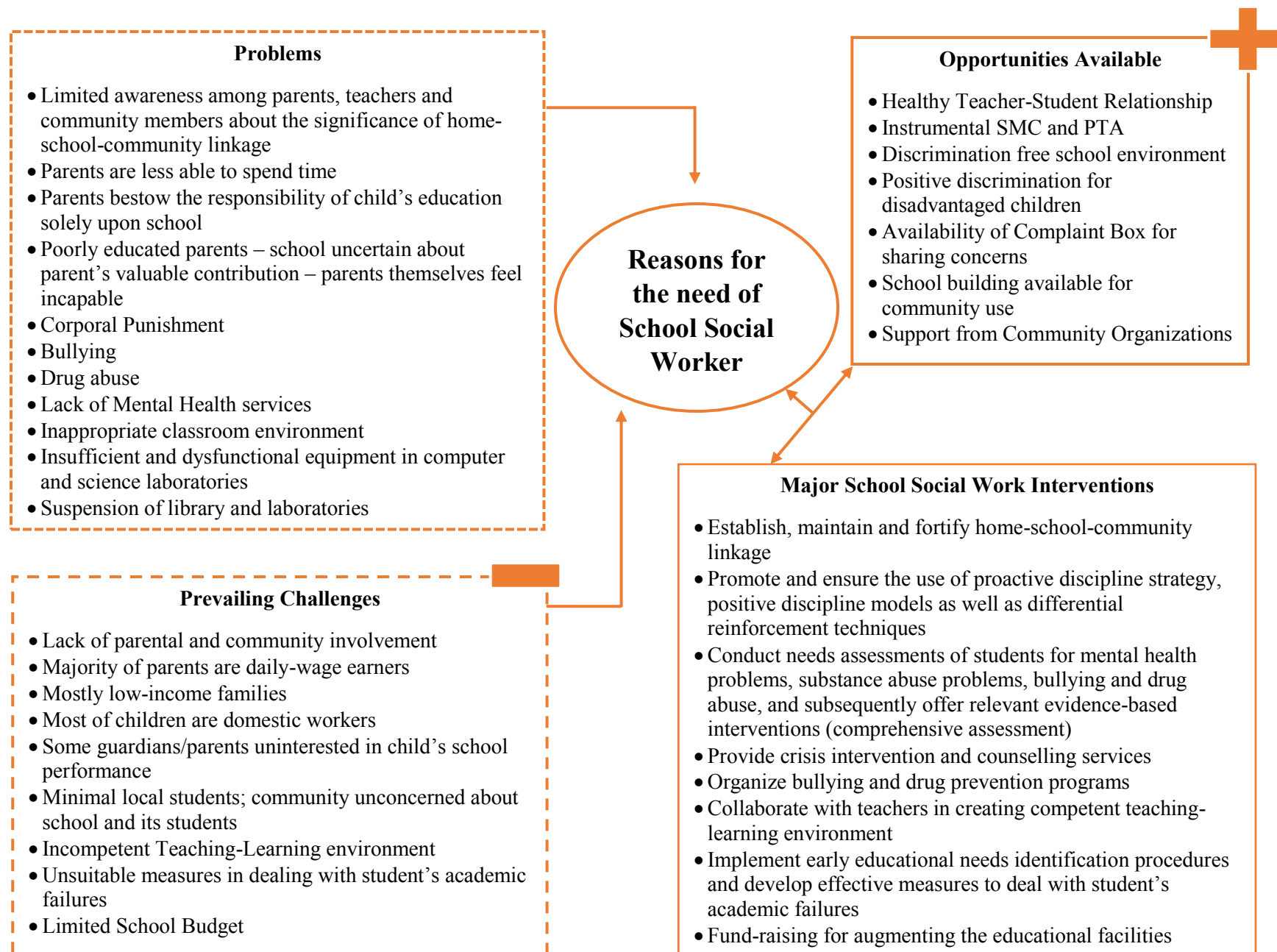


Figure 22 Rationale for School Social Work Practice

School Social Workers are pivotal linkage between home, school and community to support students in accomplishing academic success as well as meeting their needs. They concentrate on reducing the difficulties in personal, family, school and community level along with diminishing its influence on the students. Table 2 explicates the function of school social worker relative to the problems and issues discovered through this research study. Collaboration and cooperation with school administration, teachers, parents as well as community members at different levels while implementing the intervention strategies should be ensured.

*Table 2 Function of School Social Worker considering the problems and issues existent in the school*

<b>Problems / Issues</b>	<b>Function of School Social Worker</b>
1) Tenuous home-school-community linkage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Educate teachers, school staffs, parents and community members about the significance of establishing, maintaining and fortifying the linkage</li> <li>2) Support the school staffs, SMC and PTA in developing avenues for parent involvement in the school operations and programs</li> <li>3) Implement strengths-based, trauma-informed and systems-focused approach to enhance parental involvement</li> <li>4) Role of mediator between the partners to help ease conflicting interests and stimulate progress towards common goals</li> <li>5) Empower parents to be effective advocates for their child's education</li> <li>6) Ensure the involvement of all parents in the planning, implementing, and monitoring of programs</li> <li>7) Implement Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project; School Social Workers can take up the role of visitors.</li> <li>8) Promote the expansion of the notion of school beyond the confines of the building to include the community</li> <li>9) Design activities and programs to augment parental and community involvement in school as well as in student's learning and development</li> <li>10) Encourage parents to create relevant learning environment at home, including discussing with their child about school activities and helping with homework</li> </ol>
2) Corporal Punishment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Raise awareness among school teachers, administrators, parents and community members about the harmful physical and psychological effects of corporal punishment</li> <li>2) Educate them about the positive discipline models, in addition to developing the skills of teachers as well as parents concerning effective strategies to inculcate order and discipline among children</li> <li>3) Train teachers and parents on the use of proactive discipline strategies as well as differential reinforcement techniques</li> <li>4) Organize social skills training for students</li> <li>5) Develop a system for continuous monitoring of disciplining mechanism and ensure its effective implementation</li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6) Formulate stern policies to deal with any reported incident of corporal punishments, in collaboration with school administration</li> <li>7) Publicly applaud to honor the students who display positive values</li> <li>8) Lead focus group discussions, workshops, and seminars on the issue</li> <li>9) Initiate media campaigns with the aim to enable building a child-friendly and sensitive approach among people towards dealing with children</li> </ul>
3) Mental Health Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Deliver classroom instruction that enhances awareness of mental health, promotes healthy behaviors, and reduces the stigma associated with mental health issues</li> <li>2) Consult and collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents, and paraprofessionals to organize functional behavioral assessments, recognize reasonable behavioral goals, outline positive behavioral strategies, and determine methods for monitoring progress</li> <li>3) Provide responsive services including internal and external referral procedures, counseling or crisis intervention focused on mental health</li> <li>4) Educate teachers, administrators, parents/guardians and community members about the mental health concerns of students, including recognition of role environmental factors have in causing or exacerbating mental health issues</li> </ul>
4) Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Work with students, teachers, school administrators and the community to prevent bullying in school and support the teachers and the school staffs to intervene when bullying occurs</li> <li>2) Assist in implementing anti-bullying programs, assist victims, bully and individuals present in a bullying incident, by providing counseling services</li> <li>3) At the micro level, perform a needs assessment on students for bullying prevention</li> <li>4) At the mezzo level, provide assistance in organizing training for school staff and administration, or work with the administration about a bullying prevention program</li> <li>5) Organize effective awareness programs highlighting the clear notion of bullying and teasing</li> <li>6) Conduct classroom presentations focusing on healthy ways to express emotions, replacement behaviors of bullying as well as discussing with students about the prevention techniques</li> <li>7) Develop monitoring mechanism along with strong policy to deal with bullying acts, in collaboration with school administration</li> <li>8) At the macro level, be the voice, and lobby for bullying policies and laws changes</li> </ul>
5) Drug Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Organize drug prevention programs</li> <li>2) Conduct assessment of drug abuse problems</li> <li>3) Implement strengths-based approach, significantly harm-reduction technique</li> <li>4) Organize life skills training for students</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) Initiate Project Northland with active involvement of school as well as community members</li> <li>6) Connect the students who abuse drugs with treatment centers, review progress frequently and establish support systems</li> <li>7) Establish support system for the student</li> </ul>
6) Incompetent teaching-learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Support the teachers in designing relevant and interactive teaching methods, teaching learning materials as well as classroom environment; parents and students can be engaged as well</li> <li>2) Formulate mechanism to monitor the teaching-learning process at the school and ensure its effective implication</li> <li>3) Promote the appreciation of the teachers through incentives</li> <li>4) Influence the focus of school towards practical knowledge</li> <li>5) Organize after-school programs focusing on promoting social and cognitive competence of students</li> <li>6) Gather funds to re-operate library, science lab, and computer lab; appeal community members to donate books for library</li> <li>7) Develop effective criteria for section division</li> </ul>
7) Academic Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Implement early educational needs identification procedures to promote cognitive and social competence and apply following measures to eradicate the trend of grade retention</li> <li>2) Design measures to figure out the presence of learning disabilities and learning problems among the students and design interventions to address it, and evaluate the efficacy of those interventions</li> <li>3) Design age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instructional strategies to accelerate progress in the classroom</li> <li>4) Ensure that focus is given to individual student needs while meeting the student's academic competence</li> <li>5) Encourage parental involvement to maintain frequent contact with teachers, supervise homework and encourage student involvement in school activities that promote learning. School Social Worker can make home visits to update about the child's progress and setbacks, to the families who are busy and are disconnected from school.</li> <li>6) Organize school-based mental health programs with the aim to promote the social and emotional adjustment of children as addressing behaviour problems has been found to be effective in facilitating academic performance</li> </ul>
8) Water and Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ensure proper maintenance of the water filtration system</li> <li>2) Ensure provision of safe drinking water as well as adequate water supply and hand-washing facilities in toilets</li> <li>3) Encourage school staffs as well as students to maintain cleanliness in school, including classrooms, toilets, and playgrounds</li> </ul>



To conclude, the school has put on efforts to upgrade the school, however paramount issues remain to be unsettled. Although the school has succeeded in promoting gender equality and discrimination free school environment with school activities accessible to everyone, constructive endeavors in forming and fortifying home-school-community linkage, developing competent teaching-learning environment, tackling mental health issues and eradicating problems such as corporal punishment, drug abuse, bullying is deficient. It is crucial for the school to shift its focus from providing education to educating children with equal emphasis on their emotional and psychological development and formation of a conducive home, school and community environment. In order to ensure that the cornerstone of the school is child education as well as child welfare, the need of School Social Worker is imperative.

## Annex

### Annex 1

Gan Research & Learning  
Resource Center

Regd. No.: 133723/071/072

Post Box: 2717, Ganesh chowk-7, Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu, Tel: 01-4016235, E-mail: ganrlrc@gmail.com

मिति २०७३।१०।११ गते

श्रीमान प्रधानध्यापक ज्यू  
श्री जन उदय मा. वि.  
भैसीपाटी ललितपुर ।

**विषय : Research Study गर्नका लागि सहयोग गरीदिने बारे ।**

उपरोक्त विषयमा यस संस्थाबाट विगतमा स्वयंसेवकका रुपमा काम गर्नुभएका विद्यार्थी श्री कृति वैद्य जी ले स्नाकोत्तर अध्ययनका क्रममा अनुसन्धानका लागि यस संस्थामा निवेदन पेश गर्नुभएकोले सो निवेदनका आधारमा अनुसन्धानको लागि श्री जन उदय माध्यमिक विद्यालयलाई सिफरिस गर्न चाहान्छु । तसर्थ उहाँलाई आवश्यक पर्ने सूचना प्रदान गरेर अनुसन्धानमा सहयोग गरिदिनुहुन विद्यालय परिवारलाई अनुरोध गर्दछु । अनुसन्धानबाट प्राप्त भएको निष्कर्षबाट विद्यालय र यस संस्थाको ज्ञानको दायरा अवश्य नै बढ्ने छ भनि आशा गर्दछु । पुनश्च सहयोगका लागि तत्परता देखाउनुभएकोमा विद्यालय परिवारलाई धेरै धन्यवाद दिन चाहान्छु ।

द्रष्टव्य : अनुसन्धानका लागि तयार पारिएको Questionnaire र Proposal यसै पत्रमा संलग्न गरिएको छ ।

Gan Research & Learning  
Resource Center

कार्यक्रम संयोजक

दिल माया लामा

ज्ञान रिसर्च एण्ड लर्निङ रिसोर्स सेन्टर

Figure 23 Request letter from GAN to Jana Udaya School to support for the research study

## Annex 2 – Questionnaire

### A) Home-school-community linkage

#### 1) Elements

##### Level of the Linkage

1. Does the school develop school's plan and program for family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and community members?
2. Does school encourage parental and community involvement in school activities?
3. Are the family members and community members involved in learning activities in the classroom?
4. Does the school utilize community resources to enhance the student's skills and learning?
5. Does the community organize programs to enhance student's skills and learning?
6. Does the school take initiative in solving community problems? What about collaboration between school and community in solving the problems?
7. What role does community, parents, schools, and students play in strengthening the home-school-community linkage?

##### Implementation and Important of the Linkage

1. Does every parent attend the school activities and programs?
2. How often do parents visit the school?
3. What has been the major contributions of PTA and SMC?
4. Does the PTA or SMC include members from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups at school?
5. Are parents and community members involved in school decision making?
6. Does the school organize workshops for parents to ensure effective involvement in the education of children?

#### 2) Information Distribution and Maintaining Communication

1. Which communication tools are used for information distribution?
2. Do parents usually feel "up-to-date" and well informed about events at school?
3. What type of information is and should be distributed?
4. Does child share their school experiences with parents, on their own?
5. Do students feel comfortable in expressing their opinions, thoughts, feelings, and problems with teachers and vice-versa?
6. Has the communication helped to strengthen the linkage?
7. Has the communication led to trust and understanding within the linkage?

#### 3) Problems and Obstacles for this linkage

1. What major factors have limited the success of the schools' family and community involvement efforts?
2. Does school realize the significance of involving parents in the school activities?

3. Does the school create flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate?
4. Do you feel that school, community, and family are comfortable to share their needs and attitudes with each other?

B) Ethical guidelines and educational policy

1) School Safety

1. Do you feel safe at school?
  - a. If yes, what aspects of school make you feel safe?
  - b. If no, what aspects of school make you feel unsafe?
2. How is the student-teacher relationship?

2) Bullying

1. 'Bullying is sometimes fun to do', what is your opinions towards this statement?
2. Has your child ever been bullied? (To parents)
  - a. How do you deal with bullying of your child? How do you handle your child and the bully?
3. Have you encountered bullying incidents? (to teachers)
4. Have you been bullied? (to students)
5. Do you know if any students have seen others being bullied? If yes, do they ask the bully to stop?
6. How does school deal with acts of bullying?
7. Has the school conducted any programs in bullying?
8. How do you think bullying should be stopped?

3) Problem solving

1. Whom do the students approach when they have problems?
2. Do the students feel secure in expressing the problems they encounter at home with someone at the school and vice-versa?
3. Are students encouraged to share their problems with the school and their parents?
4. Do the parents and teachers share the issues related to the students among each other?
5. Do the students inquire their academic problems with the teachers?
6. Do the school collaborate with parents and/or community member, an organization in dealing with student's problem?
7. Are counselors and psychologists available to work with students who are troubled or disruptive?

4) Educational Values and Training

- 1) How do you define effective teaching-learning environment?
- 2) What teaching method is frequently used by the teachers?
- 3) Does the school have adequate teaching-learning material?
- 4) Is effectiveness of teaching monitored?
- 5) Are the classes divided into sections? If yes, what are the criteria?

- 6) Do teachers attend any training programs?
- 5) Punishment and Control of Students
1. Are the students punished when they do something inappropriate?
  2. What do you think are the effects of the punishment on the student?
  3. Do you think it encourages them to correct their behavior?
  4. How is the low attendance of the students dealt?
  5. What actions are taken when students arrive late in school or classroom?
  6. In your opinion, what are the alternatives to punishment?
- C) Education rights and advocacy
- 1) School Environment
    1. Does every student have access to all the school activities?
    2. How do you find the classroom environment?
    3. Are there educational facilities such as the library, laboratories?
    4. Does the school provide safe drinking water?
    5. Is the sanitation in the school maintained?
    6. Is stationary and scholarship provided by the school?
  - 2) School Rules and code of conduct
    1. How often are the school rules/policies updated?
    2. In your opinion, are the school rules fair?
    3. Does the school treat everyone fairly when breaking school rules?
  - 3) Academic failure and related school practices
    1. What measures are taken by the school to deal with the academic failure of students?
    2. If a student fails a subject, what does the teacher do? How do parents react?
    3. Do the teachers and parents appreciate students when they make academic achievements?
  - 4) Discrimination and Equality Problems
    1. What kind of relation is there between students of different cultures, races, or ethnicities?
    2. In your opinion, are there any groups who are positively and negatively discriminated?
    3. In your view, are both male and female students given equal opportunities?
    4. Are female teachers given roles and responsibilities and entitled to opportunities as equal to that of male teachers?

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